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ABSTRACT

This publication presents interviews with 11 prominent women, representing different backgrounds, philosophies, and life experiences, in which they speak about their own experiences with work and family issues. The introduction, "On Common Ground: Prominent Women Talk about Work & Family" (Diana Zuckerman), provides an overview. The 11 interviews present the women's perspectives on the following topics: their upbringing and goals while growing up; juggling career and family; spending time with children; and their happiness with their choices, along with changes they would make if they had to do it over again. Recurrent themes were identified: the importance of family; the enjoyment of work; and respect for friends, relatives, and other women who have made other choices. The 11 interviewees are as follows: Judy Woodruff, prime anchor and senior correspondent, CNN; Susan Molinari, former Congresswoman from New York; Linda Chavez-Thompson, Executive Vice President, AFL-CIO; Janice Weinman, former Executive Director of American Association of University Women; Mary Matalin, political strategist and commentator; Gail Shaffer, Chief Executive Officer, Business and Professional Women, USA; Carole Simpson, anchor, ABC's World News Tonight Sunday; Iris Chang, author, "The Rape of Nanking"; Ellen Levine, Editor-in-Chief, "Good Housekeeping"; Irene Natividad, principal, Natividad & Associates, and Co-President, Global Women's Trade Network; and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Lieutenant Governor of Maryland. (YLB)

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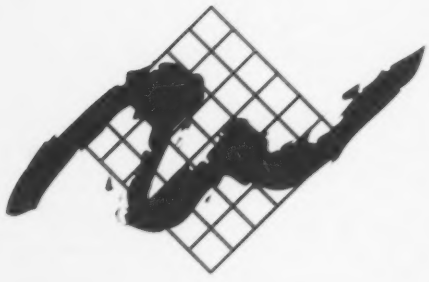
ED 429 232

On Common Ground:

Prominent Women Talk About Work & Family

Judy Woodruff • Susan Molinari • Linda Chavez-Thompson • Janice Weinman • Mary Matalin • Gail Shaffer • Carole Simpson • Iris Chang • Ellen Levine • Irene Natividad • Kathleen Kennedy Townsend

INTRODUCTION & INTERVIEWS BY DIANA ZUCKERMAN



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INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH

About the Institute for Women's Policy Research

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) is a public policy research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating the debate on public policy issues of critical importance to women and their families. IWPR focuses on issues of poverty and welfare, affirmative action and pay equity, employment and earnings, work and family issues, and the economic and social aspects of health care and domestic violence.

The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups around the country to design, execute, and disseminate research that illuminates economic and social policy issues affecting women and families, and to build a network of individuals and organizations that conduct and use women-oriented policy research. IWPR, an independent, nonprofit organization, also works in affiliation with the graduate programs in public policy and women's studies at The George Washington University.

About this Report

On Common Ground: Prominent Women Talk About Work & Family, is based on a project directed by Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., former Director of Research and Policy Analysis at the Institute for Women's Policy Research. The project was supported by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The interviews were conducted and edited by Dr. Zuckerman during the summer and fall of 1998. The Institute's many general and institutional support funders underwrote the publication and dissemination of this report.

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On Common Ground:

Prominent Women Talk About Work & Family

INTRODUCTION & INTERVIEWS BY DIANA ZUCKERMAN

INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH

Foreword

The Institute for Women's Policy Research is pleased to present a snapshot of the challenges confronting women in the late twentieth century through this series of personal interviews. In the past several decades, women have made unprecedented gains in public life, as the careers of the women who tell their stories here attest. Each one recognizes that her journey has been shaped by her gender, as well as by her class, race, or ethnicity, and notes how her options as a woman were influenced not only by her own talents and abilities but also by parental and societal expectations. Each of these successful women—from the arenas of business, labor, politics, advocacy, government, and the media—has also struggled with the dilemma of how to build a satisfying private life while meeting the intense demands of succeeding in her career. Each notes that achieving a workable balance is difficult in a society which has provided women with neither a blueprint nor a support system for combining family care with a successful career outside the family. The real dilemmas these women face suggest how much harder it must be for women with more limited access to power and resources to cope with both work and family responsibilities.

This project is an unusual one for IWPR. The Institute's research is most often based on statistical analysis of large, representative data sets, a method which enables us to tell the story of the "average" woman's life and analyze public policies for their actual or potential effects on the typical woman. An interview project must necessarily choose a limited sample of informants. While the stories told are thus unique rather than representative, they help to put a human face on the particular issue being examined.

These stories point to the important roles of other family members (usually husbands and mothers) and show us how job requirements and the availability of child care providers affect women's daily lives and contribute to making their particular work and family arrangement work for them. Many of the stories point to the need for more flexible employment options, for opportunities to take time off from work, and for greater societal provisions for child care, care for disabled children and adults, and elder care. Together, the stories indicate that women of all political or ideological persuasions share common ground in wanting a society that respects the diverse choices women and their families make.

IWPR acknowledges the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and Program Officer Kathleen Christensen for supporting the collection of the interviews, and the Institute's many general and institutional support funders for making the publication and dissemination of this report possible. Dr. Diana Zuckerman, formerly IWPR's Director of Research and Policy Analysis, designed the project, conducted the interviews, wrote the introduction, and edited this volume. Shannon Garrett, Research and Policy Program Coordinator, handled many of the interview arrangements, and Anna Rockett, Publications Editor, designed the book. All deserve thanks for their dedication, skill, and creativity.

Most of all, the Institute would like to express its appreciation to the women who agreed to be interviewed for this project and to share their expertise and insights with a broader audience. It is our hope that their stories will contribute to creating common ground in the policy debates that will surely continue as our society struggles to adjust its institutions to the new realities of women's lives. By telling their stories they contribute to a new cultural understanding of work and family and to the development of new blueprints for all of us.

Heidi Hartmann
Director and President
Institute for Women's Policy Research

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On Common Ground:
Prominent Women Talk About Work & Family

Introduction

Diana Zuckerman

In the last year, TV, newspapers, and magazines have been filled with stories on the challenges facing American women at work and at home. Most have focused on how women in many walks of life are making choices between career and family responsibilities, or struggling to integrate the multiple responsibilities of parenting, paid work, elder care, and being a spouse. At the same time, the public has been bombarded with information about the importance of early child development on later achievement and the well-publicized deaths of infants in various types of child care arrangements.

Regardless of the specific issue being discussed, much of the public debate has been divisive, with little effort to find the common ground that many individuals share. The goal of this report is to listen to the voices of highly visible American women who represent a range of perspectives on issues of work and family, and to hear about the many concerns and values that they share. In their own words, they will describe how those shared concerns have inspired a respect for each other and for the different choices that women have made.

The Public Debate on Work and Family

The last few decades have seen enormous social changes in the role of women in America. As more women have entered the labor force, there has been a great deal of public debate about the "best" ways for women to combine their careers with their family responsibilities. There has also been a resurgence of media coverage regarding the "mommy wars" between mothers who stay at home to care for their families and those that are employed full-time in paid work.

Despite all the changes in cultural expectations regarding the role of women, and the statistical realities that the majority of mothers are combining career and family responsibilities using many different strategies, the public representation of the mommy wars has not changed much over the years. And yet, at the same time that old stories are being recycled, women from many walks of life, representing a wide range of age groups, are asking new questions about their ability to live a life that feels less stressful than that of a Supermom professional and more contemporary than the stereotype of a full-time wife and mother. For example, newspapers and magazines are full of stories of women who stay home to care for their children expressing their frustration that men and women who have careers seem to have little respect for full-time homemakers, and apparently think they are uninteresting to talk to (e.g., Thompson, 1998). There are also many articles about women with family responsibilities who are employed full-time feeling overwhelmed, and expressing their frustration that their employers and colleagues are unsympathetic to their efforts to spend time with their families, and their families are unsympathetic to their efforts to satisfy their employers. They may also complain that women and men who do not have children rarely fully understand or feel sympathetic to the choices and conflicting pressures that confront colleagues who are parents. In these media presentations, individuals who have made one kind of choice are sometimes judgmental of those who made different choices; for example, mothers who devote their energies to their families may criticize employed women for neglecting their children, employed mothers may wonder what full-time homemakers do with "all that free time" or may resent their ability to "afford to stay home," and men and women who have focused exclusively on their careers may resent the "lack of job commitment" of those who are trying to balance work and family.

Recent developments have the potential for making the subject even more divisive. For example:

- In the fall of 1997, an au pair, Louise Woodward, was found guilty of killing a young child in her care. The mother, a physician who worked part-time, received hate mail saying her baby's death was her own fault because she had been selfish when she chose to work rather than staying at home full-time with her infant.

- New research on child development shows that stimulation of the brain in the first three years of life will affect intelligence for the rest of a child's life. These findings, showcased in a 1997 White House conference and widely reported in the media, are certainly likely to induce guilt in mothers who do not stay home and provide the most stimulating possible environment for their young children.

- In December 1997, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued new guidelines for breast-feeding, recommending that all mothers breast-feed their children "for at least a year" and not supplement breast feeding with infant formula. These guidelines are obviously very difficult for most women to follow, since the majority return to work within six months of childbirth, and since many do not have the privacy and facilities to pump breast milk in their workplace. The Family and Medical Leave Act, which was passed in 1993, protects a worker's job for only three months. Workers in companies with fewer than fifty employees are not covered and most workers who take parenting leave are not paid.

- In early 1998, President Clinton proposed to improve the availability, affordability, and quality of day care by increasing tax breaks for dependent care and offering scholarships and training programs for child care providers. Almost immediately, male members of the Republican leadership responded by accusing the President of a proposal that would "discriminate" against taxpayers "for choosing to have one parent stay home" (Women's Policy, Inc., 1998). They then proposed increasing the tax breaks for full-time homemakers. In his 1999 State of the Union address, President Clinton reiterated his support for new legislation to improve child care, but added new funding for after-school programs and a tax credit for "stay-at-home parents."

- Most proposals to "reform" Social Security are based on the assumption that retirement income should more closely reflect life-long earnings, which has the potential to disadvantage those women who spend more time out of the workforce caring for their children and families.

Will these recent developments widen the gulf between the women who consider their primary role to be caring for their families and those who are employed full-time? The first three developments are likely to engender greater feelings of guilt among those women who choose to maintain careers when their children are young, while bolstering the decisions of those who leave the work force or who find part-time employment. The underlying message of these developments is that women must choose between being selfish by maintaining careers, thus apparently putting their children's lives and health at risk, or staying at home, which often has a very negative impact on their current incomes, careers, and future economic security.

As the stereotypical American family of full-time homemaker and working father with two or three children has become less typical, the public has given more attention to the issues facing parents today. These include general issues, such as mothers' need for fathers to do more and the needs of all workers for paid family leave, as well as the unique problems facing single mothers with sons, and single parents caring for chronically ill children (see, for example, "Mothers Can't Win,"

1998). In addition, the aging of the baby boomer generation and the increased longevity of the U.S. population will inevitably mean that a growing number of employees will be faced with conflicts between work and the need to help care for aging parents, spouses, or siblings. Not every employee is a parent, but most employees have parents or other relatives, and an increasing number will find that they have close relatives who will need their assistance. More workers may need leave and may lose critical income unless a systematic way can be found to provide economic support.

The real issue that confronts our society is not the "mommy wars" but rather the larger problems challenging a growing number of individuals: how to combine work and family responsibilities in ways that provide economic security, satisfying family relationships, and general well-being.

There are no easy answers for how individuals and their families can best make the choices that confront them, but it is possible to focus on the common ground that unites women with different lifestyles and experiences. The interviews conducted for this project indicate that women who are prominent today represent a wide range of experiences as girls growing up, and as women making important decisions regarding work and family. By listening to them, we can help reframe the public debate to better reflect the views of women across the country.

What does the "Woman on the Street" Say?

Our first interviews were conducted with Celinda Lake and Linda DiVall, two experts on the gender gap among voters. In conducting polls and focus groups for Democratic candidates and women's organizations, Celinda Lake has found that when given the opportunity, women with very different backgrounds find common ground, regardless of their political beliefs. She informed us that women tend to focus on their relationships with other women, and enjoy supporting and acknowledging the accomplishments and transitions (births, marriages, promotions, divorces) of other women. She also found that women from widely varying backgrounds shared a common bond of concerns about whether women are treated fairly in the workplace, and about the general lack of acknowledgement of women's contributions.

Linda DiVall, a Republican strategist who is president of American Viewpoint, also found considerable common ground among women on issues such as children's need to be loved and nurtured and the need for quality child care. She reports that "stay-at-home mothers" feel like second class citizens, while many employed mothers are ambitious but feel guilty if they do not stay home with young children or care for aging parents. DiVall also found that many women are concerned about women's abilities to combine work and family and see quality child care as a prerequisite for women's accomplishments at the highest levels in the work place. She expressed amazement at the inability of many politicians to understand the stresses that women face as they try to balance their work and family responsibilities. Like Celinda Lake, she too described the bonding that takes place between women of different backgrounds as they share their experiences during focus groups.

Our next step was to interview eleven prominent American women, representing many different backgrounds, philosophies, and life experiences, to listen to what they had to say about their own experiences with work and family issues. They were asked about their upbringing, their goals growing up, and about how they had managed at different times in their adult lives.

Family Background Sets the Stage But Doesn't Determine the Plot

Many of the women who were interviewed grew up with stay-at-home mothers. They express a great deal of admiration for their mothers, but most decided at an early age that they would choose a different path regarding a career, and most of their parents were very supportive of those choices. The

women whose mothers were employed, however, often had a particular pride in that fact, and clearly modeled their choices after those of their mothers to some extent.

Several of the women described their parents as having high expectations for them. Mary Matalin, a well-known political strategist who ran President George Bush's re-election campaign, described her father telling her that she could "do anything," even though there were no clear expectations about what that might mean. Coming of age in the 1970s, Mary was caught between two worlds: after attending graduate school in journalism, Mary took courses at a beauty school in order to be able to help her mother, who ran a beauty school. Judy Woodruff, a CNN anchor, describes how her mother, who did not graduate from high school, was vehement that she go to college and supported her decision to get the best possible education. Similarly, Carole Simpson, an ABC News anchor, described how her mother, who had to drop out of ninth grade to help raise her younger siblings, wanted to make sure that her daughters had a college education and could be self-sufficient. Irene Natividad, the former Chair of the National Commission on Working Women, described how her parents expected her to do well in school, and were disappointed when she married while still in graduate school. Iris Chang, the best-selling author of *The Rape of Nanking*, spoke of how her father encouraged her to study math and science and discouraged her from caring too much about her looks and becoming a "mall girl," showing by his example that men would be interested in women who were intelligent and spirited.

In contrast, Ellen Levine, editor-in-chief of *Good Housekeeping*, spoke of her middle class upbringing, where she was expected to be a good student, but to get married, have children, and "play golf and shop forever." Linda Chavez-Thompson, the vice president of the AFL-CIO and the highest ranking woman in the U.S. labor movement, was forced to drop out of school after ninth grade to help support her family, and grew up in a household where women and men congregated separately to talk. Nevertheless, she credits her success partly to a mother who made a conscious decision not to teach her what she had always been told to teach her daughters: the traditional view of a woman's place.

Some of the women described being surprised by the prominence they have achieved in their careers, and others spoke more of a sense of a clear path where they worked hard and eventually ended up where they wanted to be. Regardless of their family backgrounds, which ranged from picking cotton to being the daughter of a U.S. Senator and niece of the President of the United States, none of the women grew up with career aspirations that were nearly as impressive as the careers they have achieved. For example, Mary Matalin grew up in a working class section of Chicago's South Side, and aspired to be "a secretary to one of the important men" who worked in the skyscrapers of Chicago. She believes that her success is due to "the fluke of following my gut." Linda Chavez-Thompson had to leave high school after ninth grade to pick cotton and clean houses to help support her family, and aspired to be a sales clerk at Sears—"a job where I could dress up and go to work every day." She still remembers her feeling of accomplishment when her job as a bilingual secretary enabled her to buy a dining room table, a luxury that she had seen in the homes she cleaned, but not in her family home. Ellen Levine, editor-in-chief of *Good Housekeeping*, aspired to be reporter Lois Lane, but described herself as having no real career goal and making job moves that were "just happenstance." Judy Woodruff knew that she wanted more independence than her homemaker mother, but did not know what career she wanted, other than "not a teacher." Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the Lt. Governor of Maryland and the only woman in the Kennedy family to run for public office, went to law school after college but never expected to enter politics; she believes that the choices that she made early in her adult life made a political career more difficult to achieve.

While some of the women took surprising paths to their current success, several others describe

choices that seemed easier and almost inevitable. Gail Shaffer, Chief Executive Officer of Business and Professional Women, USA, perceived herself as following in the footsteps of a mother who was a teacher and did not marry until she was 37, by running for political office in her twenties and becoming Secretary of State of New York by the age of 34. Susan Molinari, the daughter of a Congressman, was elected to the New York City Council at the age of 27, and became a member of the U.S. House of Representatives at the age of 32. Janice Weinman, former Executive Director of the American Association of University Women, and Irene Natividad each pursued initial careers in academic administration at the same time as their volunteer work in politics, and moved into careers that reflect both those interests.

Juggling is a Struggle

Juggling career and family was an important part of life for many of the women, whether or not they have children. Their strategies were sometimes creative, and at other times reflect the struggles of trial and error. Iris Chang spent months writing her best-selling book at home on the "midnight shift" in order to spend time with her husband when he came home from work. She worked at home while he slept and went to sleep when he left for work in the morning. Gail Shaffer described her efforts to care for her aging parents and other elderly relatives while Secretary of State of New York, sometimes struggling to visit them in hospitals in different cities. Judy Woodruff delayed marriage and childbirth in order to pursue a career that she loved in TV journalism, and described a great sense of accomplishment when she was nevertheless able to give birth to her first child just before her 35th birthday. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend worked part-time when several of her children were young, and as her work hours increased she was able to rely more on her husband, a college professor with a relatively flexible schedule. In her previous position as president of the National Women's Political Caucus, Irene Natividad traveled so much she felt like she missed her son's childhood, and was crestfallen when a friend agreed that her feelings were accurate. Linda Chavez-Thompson initially relied on her mother, who lived next door, for child care, but also juggled her work schedule to make time for her son's special needs. Carole Simpson, who got her first television news position while on maternity leave with her first child, left her baby in the care of her mother during the week. She and her husband visited her parents and her daughter after work every day and put the baby to bed, and took the baby home every weekend. Mary Matalin, who had her first child at the age of 41, after she had established her career as a political strategist, was able to arrange her work in ways that minimized commuting and maximized her ability to combine a TV and radio show with raising a baby. However, she dropped her TV show when her second child was born. Susan Molinari left the U.S. Congress while in a leadership post in the Republican party, when she decided she was unwilling to choose between spending time with her infant daughter and time with her constituents.

Although these prominent women have many more resources and options than most other women, the major conflict between work and family responsibilities has been central to their lives. Most were able to afford quality child care when their children were young, but they still are limited by the fact that there is "only one of them" and only 24 hours in each day to do their work and spend time with their families. There are certainly times when they desperately needed to be in at least two places at once.

All the women had examples of when they wanted or needed to spend time with their children, parents, or spouses and needed to take time from work to do so. Many of the mothers gave examples of trying to spend time with their children whenever possible, taking their young children on business trips, to work-related receptions, and to dinner parties or other events. Mothers of school-aged children described their efforts to find the time to participate in school activities with their children or on their behalf. For example, Judy Woodruff described trying to predict the timing of impeachment hearings and other major news

events so that she could volunteer to go on a school trip with her child's class later in the year. Janice Weinman described taking her daughter along to community board meetings, political club events, and voter registration drives on the streets of New York City. Mary Matalin described her daughter Matty's 21,000 air miles before she was three months old, from accompanying Mary on her many public appearances and business trips.

Since the women had high-powered careers, they did not have personal experience with being put down by men and women who were employed, but most were aware of status differentials based on careers. Susan Molinari described the unsettling feeling, when she was unemployed immediately after she lost her job at CBS, when she needed to fill out a form at the doctor's office and didn't know how to fill in the blank space for occupation. Ellen Levine spoke of feeling some hostility from other doctors' wives years ago because she broke the mold by working, but believes that today mothers who are homemakers have a much harder time because some people are dismissive of them and leave them out of their conversations. Many of the women describe feeling devalued at the business parties of their spouses, but being able to shrug off the disinterest of their husbands' colleagues as inevitable and not to be taken personally. All the women clearly described their own respect for women who make different juggling choices.

Women who worked part-time described the difficulty of obtaining the kinds of jobs they wanted on a part-time basis. Ellen Levine described accepting a part-time position at *Cosmopolitan* magazine, only to quickly learn that it would have to be full-time. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend described how early in her career, her desire to work part-time and her questions about juggling work and family apparently eliminated her from consideration for certain jobs, including at large law firms and in the public sector.

Women with no children described a different set of problems. For example, Gail Shaffer learned that as an unmarried cabinet member for the State of New York, she was expected to be available for meetings or trips more often than married officials. Although she was the CEO of her office, and could take time for family responsibilities when necessary, that did not help her when both her parents became seriously ill at the same time and were in hospitals in different cities. Iris Chang, who hopes to have children within the next few years, described the critical comments of relatives who openly doubt her ability to be a good mother if she continues to be a successful writer.

Myth vs. Reality

For many years, women's magazines have encouraged working women to spend quality time with their children, but the reality of women's lives is that they struggle to spend as much time as possible with their children, and that sometimes means taking their children with them to places that are less than ideal for young children. Judy Woodruff described taking her infant son to dinner parties every chance she had, despite the fact that she had spent years wondering why other friends brought their children to parties. Mary Matalin dismissed the idea of carving out quality time, concluding that it is just as important to have "hangout time" where you are together but don't necessarily talk or do anything. She also talked about living with the reality of messy kids, messy households, and legs that are not shaved every day.

Several of the women feel incredibly lucky that they have managed to "have it all." Others believe that it is not possible to really have it all, and feel varying degrees of satisfaction with having to give up some of their fantasies or even time to relax. For example, Judy Woodruff expressed relief that women in our society are now getting away from the notion of superwomen, because "all of us who do this, however we do it, feel a sense of loss" and the inevitable feeling that we will always be shortchanging something. Janice Weinman talks about feeling that the women she knows end up having no time for themselves because they have put the needs of work and family before their own

needs. She sees that many of her friends feel worn out, and speculates that many will retire earlier than their mothers did. Similarly, Ellen Levine often hears her friends ask, "Are we working too hard?" She speculates that men are also worried about that but might not talk about it "with as much abandon as we do." Carole Simpson describes the benefits of finally realizing that when you balance work and family, you also have to include time for yourself in the equation. She pointed out that it was sometimes necessary to tell her teenage son that she could not listen to his problems because she needed time for herself.

These feelings of work overload reflect the fact that for many of these women, the salient choice that they have made is not between paid work and unpaid work, or full-time vs. part-time employment, but rather between working very long work hours (including paid and unpaid work) and working more reasonable hours. And, in many cases, the women acknowledge that the long hours they spend at work are as much a reflection of their own dedication, perfectionism, or drive than a demand of the job itself.

The Road Not Taken

All the women talked about the difficulty of combining work and family, and expressed their respect for women who make a wide range of choices regarding work and family. They were happy with most of their choices, but virtually all could easily name some changes they would make if they had to do it over again. They were aware of the kinds of "either/or" choices that many women need to make and many expressed the desire to help other women so that they could more easily combine their work and family interests. For example, Janice Weinman and Irene Natividad both expressed regret that their career choices resulted in having only one child. Both have worked for organizations dedicated to providing more options for women who want to combine career and family responsibilities. Gail Shaffer described how her early success in politics resulted in her putting off concerns about the rest of her life and eventually conflicted with her desire to marry and have children. She sometimes feels that she traded off having a personal life because she followed a particular career track.

Linda Chavez-Thompson tells how dedicating her life to the labor movement cost her her first marriage and meant she had less time for her children. As a teenager, her daughter hated the union, and resented the fact that her mother worked long days, sometimes seven days a week. But by the age of 22, the same daughter became as committed to the ideals of the union as her mother was. And Linda found a "very wonderful" second husband who was also committed to the labor movement.

Iris Chang, who recently turned 30, wonders when is a good time to have children. She clearly believes that having children is important and wants the experience, but she also worries about how it will affect the rest of her life.

Sometimes the changes they would make were relatively small, but still ones that clearly mean a lot to them. For example, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend regrets sending her first child to a day care center, and believes her daughter would have been happier being cared for by a baby sitter in her home.

Common Ground and Respect

The importance of family was a recurrent theme. For example, Mary Matalin expressed her shock that although she had no maternal instincts before having children, she now feels herself overflowing with love for her daughters. She also believes that in political campaigns the campaign becomes your family, so that when you actually have a family, you cannot enjoy working on a campaign in the same single-minded way. Judy Woodruff expressed the joy of watching her teenage son learning to walk and talk again following a brain injury. Carole Simpson described how her children helped to center her, and recalled with a glowing smile how wonderful it was to leave the

problems at work to come home to a child who was really happy to see her. Susan Molinari described how her initial concerns about finding quality care for her daughter, or whether her husband would have enough time to spend with their daughter, were less important than the fact that Susan herself wanted to spend time with her daughter. She realized that "God could come down and be with her and I'd still be mad because I'm not with her."

The enjoyment of work was another recurring theme. The women who could share that enjoyment with their spouses were especially grateful. Susan Molinari described the exhilaration of having both herself and her husband running for Congressional leadership positions in the Republican party at the same time. In contrast, Mary Matalin felt the same sense of accomplishment and exhilaration, but it was complicated because she and her husband, James Carville, worked for opposing candidates. They have both shifted their careers to include consulting candidates from other countries, so that they can work together for the same candidates. Janice Weinman describes having the freedom to go where she wanted to go and do what she wanted to do because of the support of her husband.

Respect for friends, relatives, and other women who have made other choices are also recurring themes. Mary Matalin may have been the most vehement about the need to respect women like her sister and friends who have spent years at home taking care of children, and years at work at traditional "women's jobs" that are not the topic of public adulation, but should be. Carole Simpson spoke of her great respect for the women who stay home to care for their children and help all families by becoming Cub Scout leaders, helping with school trips, and working in local politics. Gail Shaffer spoke eloquently about the goal of the women's movement to create an environment where women can have the same kinds of choices that men have, and not stereotype women who've made whichever choices they've made. Judy Woodruff believes that there is a different model for every woman, and that each woman needs to determine for herself what satisfies her deepest needs. Irene Natividad points to a recent survey showing that American children feel well-taken care of, and that their mothers, whether employed or not, are the major caretakers. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend views it from the perspective of a woman who has a daughter who is in her twenties and one in second grade, and concludes that there is much more social support for women's choices today than there was 20 years ago, and a better understanding of the many different paths to achievement and success. She believes that today people can speak more openly and honestly about the struggles, which helps them understand their own experiences and those of other women who have made other choices.

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Judy Woodruff
Prime Anchor and Senior Correspondent, CNN

Judy Woodruff is CNN's Prime Anchor and Senior Correspondent, for which she won an Emmy in 1997. Prior to joining CNN, Woodruff was the chief Washington correspondent for the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour and anchored public television's award-winning weekly documentary series, Frontline with Judy Woodruff. She was the NBC White House correspondent from 1977 to 1982. She is a founding co-chair of the International Women's Media Foundation, serves on the Board of Directors of the Freedom Forum Newseum, and served as a trustee of Duke University. She and her husband live in Washington, DC, with their three children.

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

My father was a career Army man. I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. My mother was a stay-at-home homemaker except that when I was very young she worked for a while as an elevator operator. I was born in '46, so it was after the war. We lived in Tulsa until I was five, and then moved a lot—we lived in Germany, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Taiwan, and then back to the U.S. in Augusta, Georgia, where I lived from when I was in the seventh grade until I finished high school.

Neither one of my parents had gone to college. My mother hadn't even finished high school, my father had only gotten a high school degree in the Army. But I always knew that I was going to go to college. Mother in particular pushed education.

I always knew when I was growing up that I didn't want to do what my mother did. She didn't drive—she had an accident when she started driving so she was very dependent on my father to go everywhere. She pretty much held together the home fort and was and is an amazing mother. But observing her and their relationship and her being very dependent on him had a strong influence on my decision, my thinking. I always thought that I want children, I'd love to be a mother, but I also want to have my own grounding, my own life.

I wanted to go to a good college, but my family didn't have a lot of money so I knew we couldn't afford to send me to some very expensive school. I got a wonderful scholarship at a small women's college in Raleigh called Meredith. I went there for two years and then transferred to Duke.

I didn't know what career I wanted, but I knew that I didn't want to teach. I was beginning to pay attention to the women's movement, but I didn't know that many women who had a career. The summer after my freshman year at Meredith, I came back and worked in the county treasurer's office, in Augusta, and the person who was in charge of the delinquent tax office was a woman. She was a spinster—that was the term we used then. She was probably in her fifties, as old I am now. She was one of the first women I ever observed who had a career. There weren't that many women who were combining family and work.

I thought I would major in math, but my Calculus professor thought that women shouldn't be taking advanced math and I got turned off, frankly, because of him. And then I had a course in Political Science taught by a woman professor at Meredith, and she just turned me on to politics. She also encouraged me to transfer to Duke. Once I got to Duke, I declared Political Science as my major. I worked in Washington as an intern for my

Congressman for the next two summers, and I loved it, just loved it. But some of the women I met who worked on Capitol Hill who had law degrees or graduate degrees told me that opportunities for women weren't so wonderful. So I went back to Duke, and when I took a course in Mass Communications and Politics, I started thinking about the connection between politics and communications and journalism. And that was how I decided on journalism.

After graduating from college, out of the blue, I wrote three news directors in Atlanta. I settled on Atlanta because it's close to Augusta. I thought that if I fail, I can go running home to see my family. Amazingly enough, the news director of the ABC station hired me as a secretary for the news department. Then after a few months there, I fell in love with reporting and asked him if he would let me do some reporting. The news director's answer was, "Well, we already have a woman reporter." And that was the story then, in 1968, '69. But I also worked as the weather girl, which I didn't want to do, and then I was very fortunate, because in December of '69 the news director of the CBS station offered me a job as a reporter. As I look back on it, my timing was perfect. Because I came along right at the time the women's movement was beginning to be felt.

I'm glad we're getting away from this whole superwoman business, because I don't think there is any such thing.

Juggling

For the longest time I didn't even want to think about a family. I was very ambitious and I wanted to get ahead in what I was doing, and I loved what I was doing and was completely focused on that. I got hired by NBC for the Southeastern Bureau, and although marriage and family was in the back of my mind, and I knew the clock was ticking, I just didn't think about it. I started covering the presidential campaign in '76, covering Jimmy Carter, whom I had covered as Governor. I knew all the people around him, and kept telling NBC, this guy's going to win. After he won in '76, I pestered them and they finally agreed to send me to Washington to cover the White House. I was totally focused on career.

Then I started dating my now-husband in Washington, Al Hunt. I just kept thinking, I'm not ready for marriage. When we started dating I was 29 just turning 30, then 31, 32, and we were still going together. When I was about 32, we started talking seriously. We were married when i was 33. It was this slow realization that if I was ever going to have children, which was something that I'd always wanted, that I really needed to get cracking. I knew 35 was this artificial cut-off point—you're pushing your luck.

So we were married in April of '80 and Jeffrey was born in September of '81. There I was, just three months away from turning 35 at that point, and so I had just made it under the limit. It was an evolutionary thing. I remember feeling for a long time, how in the world am I going to do this? Because my work takes so much focus, yet I really want children. It was only after Al and I had spent a lot of time together—it was clear to me that he was very supportive of my career and he, like me, really wanted children. I knew that he would be an involved father, although you don't really know those things until you see a father with a child.

I remember coming home the day I found out I was pregnant—it was Valentine's Day, 1981. I remember we looked at each other and we thought, "How are we going to do this?" because our work was our life. I was covering the White House for NBC, he was covering the

Hill for the Wall Street Journal. Our time was consumed, we never had time to do anything but work, work, work.

Jeffrey was born with a birth defect, spina bifida, and hydrocephalus. We weren't sure in the first year if he was going to be able to walk, whether he was going to be normal cognitively, and all these things were hanging over us. So we had a pretty rocky first year with Jeff. Having said that, everything moved in a positive direction. He walked on time, he talked on time, he did everything, his main issues turned out to be things that are manageable, but there are still significant issues. He's had some learning disabilities. And then this summer, he had what was supposed to be routine neurosurgery to replace a shunt for the hydrocephalus. During the surgery, they injured his brain stem, so he came out of it unable to do anything. He's been completely immobile. Now, I'm able to say this with a smile on my face because that was July 2, and this is September 29, and today he said his first words. We are in the midst of watching an amazing transformation from a boy who couldn't do anything on July 2 other than lie there and breath, to somebody who is starting to walk again, and starting to talk. It's pretty, pretty amazing what we've been through.

About three years after Jeff was born, we started trying to get pregnant again. I had a couple of miscarriages, it was really hard, we were just about to give up, and lo and behold, I became pregnant again and everything was okay and Benjamin was born in November '86, completely healthy, fine. In 1989, we adopted Lauren, who was born in Korea in May and joined our family in August.

We're fortunate enough to be able to afford good live-in help. We had one nanny who came to us when Jeff was just two weeks old and she stayed with us for nine years. After Lauren, it became clear that we needed more than one. We still have two nannies, but a lot of that is just because of scheduling. Our lives are crazy. Al is an amazingly organized person, and he's taught me to be more organized and to consider the value of every minute, literally, even on weekends. I used to like to be laid back, but now I understand you have to be very scheduled. I mean, it's plan, plan, plan, keep your priorities straight, know that you can't do everything perfectly.

Particularly right now, Jeffrey's in a rehab hospital in Baltimore, and we've been going back and forth and spending the night over there and over here, and trying to stay on top of Lauren and Ben's needs and homework, and there was a big school meeting last night. So it's the ultimate juggling, but I wouldn't have it any other way. I wouldn't trade being a mother of these three children for anything. I would have liked to have had even more kids, but I was already worrying if I was spending enough time with each one of my children. But I love them, and every one of them has just given me so much. I can't imagine life without them. On the other hand, I never could have envisioned not working. Even in the tough times, when work has been frustrating or the story has been less than uplifting, shall we say—the one we're going through right now. Even in those times, I think, "All right Judy, what would it be like if you stayed home?" and I can't imagine. I think I would be a lousy stay-at-home mom.

Myth and Reality

I'm glad we're getting away from this whole superwoman business, because I don't think there is any such thing. All of us who do this, however we do it, feel a sense of loss. I'm sure that my friends who choose to do homemaking and children only, at the time being, do feel some sense of missing out on something. On the other hand, my friends who chose not to

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have children, many of them miss out—I hear it coming through in conversations. Certainly, the women I know who do what I do, who combine career and children, feel like we're always shortchanging something. We're leaving a meeting or leaving a story because of something our children need, or we're not there when our kids need us because we agreed to do something at work. And there's just this constant pulling. You could choose to spend your life speaking about it in those terms and just being very torn and tormented and unhappy and unfulfilled. But on the other hand, you can choose to focus on the positive. And that's what you just have to do. There are going to be days that are difficult and you're going to scream and pull your hair out and feel awful. But there are also going to be days of great joy. I've come to understand that there clearly are trade-offs. I can never reach the pinnacle even though I love what I do and I'm very comfortable where I am in my profession. I'm never going to go all the way to the top. Because in order to do that you can't have any other focus in your life, you just have to be prepared to work seven days a week.

I remember coming home the day I found out I was pregnant . . . . we looked at each other and we thought, "How are we going to do this?" because our work was our life.

I have these women say to me, "Don't be so hard on yourself, you're doing a lot." It's in my nature. I love my kids, so I'm always going to be thinking, did I do enough, was I there, was I available when they were ready to talk about a problem or something on their minds?

Jeffrey occasionally would say things like, "Mom, why do they always have you working?" But then when I would be involved in an interesting story he would want to know all about it. Ben's fine about my working. Lauren is more, "Mom, a lot of my friend's moms they don't work. Can't you just stay home, Mom, and let's just bake cookies more?" She may be a stay-at-home mom. She does think my work takes me away, as hard as I try to do this. It will be interesting to watch what the children of these women will do.

The Road Not Taken

I don't think I would choose to do anything differently. Everything has worked out so wonderfully well, even considering Jeffrey's situation this year. I certainly wouldn't trade him for anything, I wouldn't trade Ben for anything, I wouldn't trade Lauren for anything. Would I have my children younger? No, because then I would have missed all the experiences that I had professionally which were critical for me in terms of later development. Professionally, I'm comfortable with all of the decisions I've made. Every place I've been has been a growth experience for me professionally. People have asked me if I went to the News Hour at PBS because I had a baby and it was too complicated to stay with the network. And I said, no, not at all, it was because it was a wonderful professional opportunity. But as it turned out, it was perfect, because I didn't have to work that many weekends, and I didn't have to do as much traveling.

I really didn't even think about the better schedule when I decided to take that job. I just figured I could handle everything. I've always had this view that it'll work. I'll just cut myself in half and make it work. I had gone from the White House to being the Today Show interviewer when Jeffrey was about a year old. I was getting up around 5:00 a.m., and not coming home until 6:00 p.m. But I knew that I was ready for more substantive work. It was truly a professional decision, and I'm amazed that it worked out so well personally.

There are people I know in my business who are able to work any night, any weekend, travel anywhere in the world for long assignments, whether it's weekends, nights. I've set that aside for this part of my life. At CNN, I'll do whatever they want, but it has to be during daylight hours because I need to go home in the evening. And that's been worked out. I'm now doing a show from 5:00 to 6:00 and 6:00 to 6:30, and by 6:30 or 7:00 I'm able to go home unless it's a big story, in which case they know I'll come in and work. I know that I'll never be the totally involved, totally volunteering mother that many of the mothers of my children's friends are. But I still get involved, and so does my husband.

Last night, Back-to-School night, they handed out this volunteer form, and because Jeffrey's in the hospital I just couldn't sign up this year. But in the past, Al and I have tried to volunteer to do potluck suppers or to drive to one class trip. I volunteered to do something this coming year in March. I thought, okay, by March if there's an impeachment, it will probably be over. I am able to get away, but I really have to plan.

I try to have a good working relationship with all the teachers and other important people at school, so that they know my intentions are good, and if they can't count on me for one thing they can count on me for something else. But it is tough. You just have to juggle, but there clearly are tradeoffs and you have to live with them. Some days I live well with them, and some days I live poorly with them.

Common Ground

We all have our different comfort levels with doing mommy things. I think I'm probably in the middle. I like to do as much as I can, but I've created a situation where I'm stretched. And so, I've made these choices.

I have a lot of friends who are moms who stay home and a lot of friends who work and don't have kids and do have kids. And I respect them all, and I believe they respect me. There's a different model for doing it for all of us. We all have to find out what it is that satisfies our deepest needs. In my case, I had two deep needs: one was to have children, but the other one was to feel that I was able to accomplish something out on my own. And also, I'm not sure I could ever be as good a stay-at-home mother as my mother was. The hours that she spent in fixing up the house and cooking and cleaning and just hovering around—I don't think I'd be very good at it.

Before I had children, I would look at people's children and be politely interested but I was not really into it. It wasn't until I had my own child that I just flipped over babies. Before we had children, I remember going to dinner parties with Al and someone would bring a baby and I would think, I wonder why they're doing that. And then of course, after Jeffrey was born, we tried to take him everywhere. We wanted to show him off. I'm sure they must have thought we were nuts, but nobody ever said anything that I remember.

There are women I know through my children's schools who have chosen to give up careers and stay home. Extraordinary, incredibly bright, smart women who have chosen to devote all of their energy to their children. Two people I'm calling to tell about Jeffrey talking today for the first time: One is a stay-at-home mom with three kids, they live right down the street, their kids are best friends with ours. Another is a friend of mine who's married but who has no children, is totally devoted to her career and her husband. So I have friends at all ends of the spectrum. And I see how they do it. Everybody does it for a different reason. They do it for what comes from deep within, and you have to respect that.

Susan Molinari
Former Congresswoman from New York

Susan Molinari followed in her father's political footsteps when she won his Congressional seat in a special election in 1990, shortly before her thirty-second birthday. She and her husband, Rep. Bill Paxon, held Republican leadership positions in the U.S. House of Representatives. She resigned her seat in 1997 to host a Saturday morning news program on CBS and spend more time with her infant daughter. She lost her CBS job the following year, and then taught a course at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University while awaiting the birth of her second child, who was born in January 1999.

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

I was raised as an only child. My dad was a real estate lawyer until I was 16 and then he ran for public office. Until that point, though, we were always involved in politics, cocktail parties at the house, demonstrations, rallies, whatever. My mother was only 20 years older than I, and so she was a young mother and we did a lot together. She was sick a lot when I was growing up, so my grandmother was the one making snacks when I got home, dinner on the dinner table kind of grandmother. She lent a little more of the noisiness, the warmth, the food smells in the house that's more traditionally associated with a large Italian family. My mother and grandmother did not work, so between the two them they were around a lot, as was my dad.

Since I was little, I was part of my Dad's political life. I was going to City Hall, I was going to closings with him. I always say to my dad that if he had had a son I'm sure I wouldn't have been in Congress, which he absolutely denies. But I think being an only child, both parents get to focus on you.

I grew up on Staten Island, and went to St. Joseph Hill Academy. I remember being in a class where you imagined yourself ten years from now. I was married with two kids. That's so much of your focus at that age, because you're trying to get dates for the first time and wondering, are you going to be popular? I also knew that I was going to be a professional woman, but what form that would take I had no idea. I always thought I would go into some kind of public relations, public affairs.

My parents raised me to leave the nest, and raised me to know I would have a career, but they were very hands off about what it would be. But it was clear that I was going to do something. I'm sort of at that stage now again.

I went to Albany State University. I wanted to study journalism, which required me to major in Political Science. And then I decided that I hated Political Science, because it was more history than what I expected, and I didn't like journalism at all. I abandoned both and because my roommate was taking courses in it, I totally fell into Communications. It was a major that I not only loved but I was pretty good at. I stayed on to get my Master's there.

By that time, my dad was a member of Congress, and I got a job at the Republican Governor's Association, and then at the Republican National Committee. I was too young and in too much of a hurry. A seat opened up on the New York City Council. People back home had been talking to me about running for office, because I was always so visible on my dad's campaign and would speak on his behalf. I was good at shaking

hands and talking to people. So I went home and ran for a seat on the New York City Council. I was 27 when I was elected. Totally not taken seriously as a candidate by the opposition, I probably looked 18. I got in a trajectory that was not anticipated, because I was the only Republican in the New York City Council, so I immediately became the minority leader. I was one of four people who had an office in City Hall, I had a car and driver. Four years after that, I ran for re-election. At that same time, my dad ran for Borough President and gave up his Congressional seat. So, in March of that year there was a special election and on my 32nd birthday I got sworn into Congress.

I'm trying to find something that will allow me to feel as satisfied professionally with less hours and less time.

Juggling

I was married when I was 30, and was separated after only two years. At the time I was elected to Congress, I was rebounding off of a bad relationship, feeling sorry for myself about that, and in Congress in some fairly visible roles. Making friends, starting a whole new life, starting new challenges, and really at that point just focusing because I had found a niche. I didn't really have time to think about everything else. I had met Bill Paxon ten years before, through New York state politics. He was part of a group of us in Congress that hung out together. Everyone was here without their families, probably 45 and younger. Bill and I just started to become better and better friends and one day I woke up and said, "Hey," and that's that.

We got married in '94 and Susan was born in '96, so I was 36 when I got married. Bill was 40. We knew we didn't have a lot of time if we were going to start a family and that's something that we wanted. After about six or seven months we decided it was time to get started having children.

When you're married, particularly to another Member, it's great, it's exhilarating. He's running for leadership, I'm running for leadership, we're helping each other out. God gave me a great gift in having a husband who didn't feel the need to compete and we were totally each other's campaign managers and friends. It was wonderful. Most people were rising in their ambitions and they were also very lonely, but we had both. And I was the Vice Chair of the House, he was the Chairman of the Congressional Committee, we were where we wanted to be. And that was great and it was fulfilling and we were meeting great people. And we had Susan and I spoke at the Republican National Convention and that was very exciting. And then all of a sudden Susan became six or seven months old, and she started to communicate back and things just started to change for me.

It became the most important relationship in my life. People say to me, "Oh, it was such a great sacrifice that you made for your daughter." I don't think I ever got past thinking about myself to think about what was best for my daughter. I knew that I just needed more time to be with her. Particularly with both Bill and I being in Congress at the time, we'd be here and just on a crazy schedule, where Congress would adjourn on Thursday night and I'd hop on a plane back to New York and do events Friday and Saturday, and come back here so Bill could go back and do something on Sat-urday and Sunday. I just started to miss Susan more and more. In the larger picture, I always thought that the United States Senate was where I was working toward. But after Susan, I knew that that was something that I'd never do.

When Susan was three, four, five months old, *anyone* could walk in, hold her, or feed her, she

wouldn't know, she wouldn't care. But she cares now. I know when she's in second and third grade and she wants to be a Brownie and it's time to go to Zoo day, and she'll say, "Mom, you haven't done this"—I know that's when you're really important in life. That's when I need to be there. I want to be able to say, "Yeah, you can have 20 girls over for sleepovers," or whatever.

Until Susan was eight months old, we had a wonderful young woman who came to the house and helped out. Then we enrolled Susan in a great day care center at the House of Representatives. I loved it, I absolutely loved it, but she got ear infections that ran into high fevers and never stopped, and we were at the point where we were going to put tubes in when the doctor suggested that we take her out of day care. And she's been healthier since then—this is her first cold since January.

I left Congress and went to work for CBS. Right after CBS fired me, I went to Bausch and Lomb to get my contact lenses. And I filled out the form and it said, "Occupation," and I went through this momentary anxiety attack sitting at Bausch and Lomb in Pentagon City not knowing what to fill out. It was clear that I wasn't comfortable putting down homemaker, which is stupid. I think I put teacher because I was about to go to Harvard to teach at the Kennedy School for seven weeks. All of a sudden it was, "What do I write? What is that identification that is me?" I'm much more comfortable with that now. It's hard to churn over these things when everything else in your life is so wonderful, but it's probably like once every two weeks at four o'clock in the morning I wake up and think, "Am I ever going to find a job that I'm as good at again, as I had in Congress?" I don't regret leaving, it was the right decision, but you stop and wonder, "Was that it?" Have you peaked? Will I ever have as much fun or be as good at something?

My second baby is due the first week in February. I'm looking for the kind of balance where I'm working more reasonable hours. I think I can leave my children at nine in the morning and I will be walking back in the door in the evening and a significant portion of my day is over. But Saturdays and Sundays, we're going to do things as a family. I think I could get to the point where that's the life that I lead, or I travel two or three days out of the week and then spend the rest of the time at home. I'm looking to find that middle ground again.

I've been doing things like MSNBC, CNN, and other programs, which give me an opportunity to feel a part of the bigger picture and have fun with that. I have been giving speeches and that's also a nice break. It would be nice to do something where the hours are flexible. You can prepare from home, but you still need to put a suit on maybe one or two days a week.

Myth and Reality

I've had enough of politics. I've had a very fulfilled life as a politician. I've done everything that I think I'd want to do. I've proven to myself that I could do it. And I just can't see going back to that kind of schedule and that kind of sacrifice of personal time. I've found that other life that says, "Oh, here's a Sunday, we can go to a harvest fair, and apple picking." The other part was great, but that's done now.

It's a little uncomfortable that I don't know where I'm going. I'd say 85 percent of me wakes up every day and says, "Thank you, God, I have a wonderful husband, beautiful house, beautiful baby, and another one on the way." This is what makes me happy. At the same time, it is hard to come off a career where you helped push the Violence Against Women Act and met with foreign leaders, and got a breast cancer stamp authorized, and did all these things, and now none of that's on your

radar screen anymore. I'm trying to find something that will allow me to feel as satisfied professionally with less hours and less time. I needed to take off some time to back off and try to get it all back.

The Road Not Taken

If I had to do it over again, I don't think I would do anything differently. It worked out well for me. CBS was a great opportunity. I learned a lot. I learned a lot about what I didn't want to do. Financially, it was a windfall because they paid me well and then paid me to not show up, which allowed us to buy a new house. We couldn't have done it any other way. And I wrote a book and did speaking. It was a great year in terms of getting out of Congress and pushing full speed ahead. I look back and I see where Congress is right now, the issues they're dealing with, and I can't say that I miss that. It gave us an opportunity to relax a little bit and think seriously about having a second child.

The big structural answer for me is to make sure that people have safe day care so they have peace of mind that their children are happy and learning.

I don't think I was ready for children when I was younger. It's that double edge. Yes, you live to be 40 and have a title and blaze that career path, and just be somebody that nobody wants to screw with. And then all of a sudden, once you've had all that, you give it up. But when you're snuggled in front of a fire with your husband and your child and your dog, you remember what it was like to be 30, with all that power and all that influence, and you cried yourself to sleep at night because you were so lonely. I know. I've done that. It is better that I look out the window and remember my glory days than to look out the window and wonder if I could have ever been glorious. Neither one is totally comfortable, but certainly I wouldn't trade being able to look back and say I did all that. I had some tremendous professional accomplishments, and now my biggest accomplishments are in my children. I don't think I could do that at 20. I know I couldn't have at 25 or even 30.

Common Ground

I think that everybody's just got to kind of relax with the choices that women make, and just say, "Fine, that's great." The women who are my friends from Congress have young kids. They're members of Congress, and they're great mothers. I don't sit there and say, "Oh well, aren't you terrible that you didn't make the same decision." They're great. They're just at a different level, and they're comfortable with the decisions that they've made. I think that we have to somehow get over this. If someone leaves their corporate position, we write about it and analyze it and say, "What does it mean for the future? And where did we go right and where did we go wrong?" With me, half the women said, " Oh, she's great, she's giving it up for her family," and the other half said, "How could she do that? She's letting a whole other generation down." It's wonderful that you can serve as a role model, but shouldn't women be given the same flexibility to be selfish with their personal needs as men have been given for generations? We don't do this to men. If a mother of young children runs for public office, we shouldn't be voting on the basis of whether she's going to be a good mother.

I always thought when I was proceeding with my plan to leave Congress that it was because we both weren't at home. And there's no doubt when I'm out of town and I know Bill's home with Susan there's just that relaxation. You say, "Okay, they're at Chuck E. Cheese's, this is great, this is what is supposed to hap-

pen." But part of it is that I don't care who's with her—God could come down and be with her and I'd still be mad that I'm not with her. Because it's what I want, it's the hugs and kisses that I want. When she's sick, I want her to come to me and say "Mama." It's that role that I desire more than anything else, to be important in her life. Those are the moments that I want right now.

Congress really can't be a family-friendly work place if you're going to do the job well. You can have more predictable hours, and that was sort of the thing that drove me over the edge finally. Because you know, Rep. Armey would say, "We'll be done at 6:00 tonight," and it's 11:00 and you're still there, so you panic. But you still owe it to your constituents to get on a plane and go back home, and go to their kids' Eagle Scout Awards and the Cancer Society dinner dances, and the opening of Soccer Day, and the opening of Little League day. And what if my daughter is in a different soccer league and a different Little League? Well, who do I go to? There was a point where the loyalty started to pull me apart a little bit.

I'm a big believer, even though I'm a Republican conservative, in nationalized daycare. The clock's not going to be turned back. Women are working because they have to. And so as a society, the big structural answer for me is to make sure that people have those safe nice little day care places that we were able to access, so that they do have that peace of mind that their children are happy and learning and they are being hugged by somebody when it can't be them.

Women can do anything. There will be a woman President. Did it surprise me that I woke up one day and said maybe I don't want to work? I don't know that I'm there, but that's not who I ever thought Susan Molinari was in my mind's eye. Either way, it is that there's just that pressure of raising our girls to not feel that they have to change the world and can be feminists and stay home. And I don't know how we get to that point where we all don't freak when we have to fill out our eye exam form.

There's always been that pressure for women that this is the way you're supposed to act, this is the way you're supposed to dress, this is the way you're supposed to act towards his parents, this is the way you're supposed to attract him. There is always an incredible pressure to follow this blueprint—and yet there really is no emotional blueprint or mentoring or societal structure that lets us all sit around and talk about how nuts we feel on occasion.

Linda Chavez-Thompson
Executive Vice President, AFL-CIO

Linda Chavez-Thompson has been the Executive Vice President of the AFL-CIO since 1995 and is the highest ranking woman in the labor movement. A second-generation American of Mexican descent, Chavez-Thompson was born to sharecropper parents in Lubbock, Texas. She is the mother of two grown children and currently serves on many national boards and committees, including the Board of Directors of United Way and the Executive Committee of the Council on Competitiveness. She serves on the President's Initiative on Race and is Vice Chair of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

My mother was raised in the old-fashioned Mexican culture that a woman is at the call of her husband. She doesn't argue with him in public, she does his bidding, she is the dutiful wife. And so my mother was very, very into that. I won't tell you that she liked it. My father's father was the patriarch of the family and all holidays and all functions were at that house. There was even disparate treatment of the children of the daughters and the children of the sons. I know my grandparents loved us all, but my grandfather thought that the women had too many rights. I think the most important thing for me was that my mother didn't teach me that.

I recently asked my mother why she hadn't. She smiled a very little smile on the edge of her mouth and she said, "I got taught that, so I figured that it was my job to teach you, but I didn't think that I wanted to, and nobody was watching me so I didn't teach you." So, that was where I figured that I could be anything and do anything I wanted to do. It wasn't necessarily what my mother taught me as what she didn't teach me that helped a lot. Because there were cultural dimensions that said that a woman didn't do a man's job, the women would sit in the kitchen, the men would sit in the living room.

After I got married and made friends, couple friends, my father found it very strange that the men and the women all sat in the same room talking to each other. In his culture, it was just not done. I won't tell you that he changed drastically, but he did change a little bit after his daughters grew up and we had a different lifestyle.

I have three brothers and there are a total of five of us girls. Two older sisters, I'm the third child and after me the other five are younger and I have two younger sisters in that mix and three younger brothers.

Before and right after I got married and moved to the city, my ultimate dream was to be a sales clerk at Sears. I mean, that was a white collar job. That was a job that was really something, not cleaning houses, not hoeing cotton, not picking cotton, a job where I could dress up and go to work every day. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would ever end up here, much less a labor union position. I didn't know what a union was, didn't much care what a union was, because I never worked any place where a union could have organized workers. And so I never thought I'd be here. The kinds of things that happened in my life that led me to take a job and to do something like this were wild. Really wild and fun.

The older men in our family didn't think that girls needed an education back in those days. And because there were four of us in school, on the thirty dollars a week that my father

earned, he could barely send us kids to school. He was a cotton sharecropper and he worked as a farm hand, a dawn to dusk job. During the summer time, we hoed cotton, which is weeding cotton, ten hours a day, five days a week. I started working when I was ten years old. The adults got fifty cents an hour, but I was a child so they gave me thirty cents an hour. But it was money that was helping the family. My brother started when he was eleven, because he was much shorter at his age. And then there were four of us working: my brother, myself, my sister, and my mother. My oldest sister was raised by my grandparents because my mother had a very difficult pregnancy and there was only one year between the two oldest ones. So my grandparents kept her.

. . . right after I got married and moved to the city, my ultimate dream was to be a sales clerk at Sears.

When it came time for the younger sister to come to work, we decided that mom should stay home. Mother had to get up at four o'clock in the morning to fix breakfast, fix lunch if we were going to be far away from the house, get the other kids lunch and whatever at the house so that they could take care of themselves because they were left at home. She then would go to work, work ten hours, come home, fix supper. For her, it was anywhere from 16 to 18 hours a day. So when there were four children working, I was chosen to go tell Dad that Mother shouldn't work. I practiced and practiced and practiced. I must have been 14 or 15. So I was the union rep. I marched in and sat my dad down. I said, "When we leave for work Mom does too and our food is cold and when we're working close by, we should be able to come home real quick and get a hot meal." He said, "Well, I'll think about it." Well, I knew we had it. Because he too suffered. I mean, he didn't have a hot meal at lunch, there was no hot meal waiting for him when he got home, dinner was an hour later after my mom got there, and then she had to take care of the kids, and I mean wash and all of the things that went with it. And so my mom didn't work from that point forward. She never worked again, ever. And I remember feeling so proud that I had done that.

We worked summers after school ended. Slowly, the wages went up as we got older, and as the younger kids grew up they became part of the little crew. When I was 15, I had finished my freshman year in high school. I loved school, I loved to read, I loved everything about school, and my dad said, "You have to drop out." And I said, "No, I don't want to drop out, I want to finish high school." And he says, "No," because my baby brother was starting school, and he said, "I can't afford to send you anymore. I can't afford five of you in school. I can only afford four."

They didn't have the school lunch programs back in those days, so he had to either send us with a bag lunch or give us money to eat at school. Of course he had no money, so we took tacos or bologna sandwiches or whatever to school. For me, I got twenty-five cents a day for lunch and I ate a bag of potato chips and a Coke at lunch time—that was all 25 cents would get you. So my dad said I had to stay home. I think I cried for two weeks. The postmistress of the little town that we lived in, Idalou, Texas—her daughter and I went to school together—offered to take me in during the week. She told my father, "She's such a smart little girl, why don't you let her go to school? She can live with me during the week, and I'll send her home on Friday." Well, you didn't do that in our culture and upbringing. I mean, a girl away from home at the age of fifteen? No way. So I devoured my brothers' and sisters' books when they brought them home. I made them go to the library to get books, I gave them titles of books to bring me

home. I remember I read *Gone With the Wind*. I mean, that book is big! I just read and re-read and re-read, because I thirsted so much for what I couldn't have.

The lady who owned the ranch said, "Do you want to learn another skill, something that you can do during the non-cotton picking or hoeing season?" Everything centers on cotton in that area. And I said yes, so she taught me how to clean her house and paid me, taught me how to clean with the little toothbrush and what you use where. I knew some house cleaning, but at 15 you let your mother do it. Then she got me jobs all around the other ranches. I had someone on a Monday, I had someone on a Tuesday, I had someone on a Wednesday, a Thursday, and I think I even got somebody on a Friday. So every day I would go out and clean houses, earn some money, bring it in, and that was it—that was my life up until I was about nineteen years of age.

I cleaned houses out of season, because the cotton hoeing season is from about June through about September, then there are the months of October and most of November, and then you start picking the cotton in December. So there were two months there, then of course the cotton picking season is over about early January. And then there's nothing in the end of January, February, March, April, May until the hoeing season starts up again. So during those periods of time, I had these ladies that I went out and cleaned house for.

They started paying me a dollar an hour. But it paid less well than hoeing cotton, where you spend ten hours a day versus four or five hours a day. So I remember going into these beautiful homes, looking at the gorgeous furniture, spotless, beautiful homes and there was one thing that I always wanted. They had kitchens with tables, and they had dining rooms, separate dining rooms. And I remember when I finally bought my first dining room table, not a kitchen table. I was so proud of myself, because I had made it, I had a dining room table. Never mind that it was still in the kitchen, but it was a dining room table. In my second marriage I actually had a dining room just like the homes that I cleaned.

When I was 20, I got married and moved to the big city, Lubbock, Texas. I continued to clean houses there, but I continued to try to find this famous Sears job. My first husband worked for the city of Lubbock in the electrical department as a helper. We met and we married, and I moved into the city and got pregnant right away. My daughter was born a month premature, and so I raised her for a little while, and then I went out to find work. But I was still looking for this famous job, and after a few years, the opportunity came. My uncle was a Saturday night beer drinking buddy of the business manager of the Laborer's Construction Local. And he told me, "This guy's looking for a bilingual secretary and I told him that I thought you could do the job." I was scared to death, absolutely scared to death. I knew how to type a little—we had found an old typewriter, and I typed like Columbus: you discover and you land on it. They needed a bilingual secretary because 75 percent of the members of that local were Mexican-Americans, and the Anglo secretary just couldn't understand them, and they couldn't understand her. So I interviewed with him. My lack of education didn't come up. When I interviewed, there were a couple of people who came in. Of course, he knew no Spanish either. He spoke to them in English, they spoke back at him in Spanish, I told him what they said, and he said, "Well, tell them this," and I told them, and then they had smiles on their faces, there was a smile on his face, and he said I was hired. So he hired me on the strength of my bilingual skills. The rest I had to learn on my own. I took out my old type-

writer and practiced a lot with a calculator. From hoping to have a job as a Sears clerk or a cashier to being a secretary was like, wow. So I showed up, scared to death. But the members were happy because they had somebody to talk to and could find out when jobs were available. I felt I was set for life as far as that job was concerned.

I figure that I'm doing a lot of good here, being able to bring the labor movement to women or people of color who don't have a voice.

And then I found out what a union is supposed to do, what it can do. My husband was with the city. City employees had no rights, no pension plan that was worth anything, very low wages, some of them had to bring their own equipment to work with, and so they wanted a union. So they joined the union and I had to help them. And that's when I ended up working for the America Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) representing the interests of public employees. Even doing some ground-breaking things in public employment for public employees, because they still don't have collective bargaining rights in Texas. Nothing much has changed, but you do keep fighting.

Juggling

My daughter was two years old when I went to work for the labor movement. My mother was my next door neighbor in Lubbock and babysat for me, and then I moved to Austin and she also moved to Austin. So she raised my daughter for five years. I would pay her a little bit of money every week. But when my daughter was seven, I moved to San Antonio, and she had to go to a day care center. I was an international rep for AFSCME and I was gone all week long. She missed her grandmother, she cried every night saying that I should come home, and so I gave up the international job with AFSCME to take a lesser position, with a cut in pay, so I could be home every day with her. I took that position knowing full well that it was a lot less money, but I was home. I went to work with the local union as an Assistant Business Manager, then I slowly began to move up to the Business Manager position, then the Executive Director position. I worked there for many years before I became the State Director of the union in Texas, with about 15,000 members.

I stayed with public employment because I loved it. The challenge of going up against politicians, taking them on, taking on City Managers who felt that they had given everything they could or would give, and we got more. Those were the kinds of challenges that I faced throughout my 25-year career in public employee representation.

I worked full time, long hours, 10, 12, 13, 14-hour days. I worked on Saturdays, Sundays, whatever it took to keep the union going. At the age of 15 my daughter did not like the union any more because it kept her mother away from her. I used to joke that my daughter hoped she was adopted so that someday her real parents would come and rescue her from this very abnormal home, this very abnormal mother. But when she was 22, she comes home from work as a union member working at the city of San Antonio, and says, "Mom, these people over at Aviation, they don't know what their rights are. Do you know what they're doing? Do you know how badly they treat them? And I told them that if they wanted to, we could have them in the union and you would do this, and you would do that." And I'm standing there, watching this transformation of a child who at 15 said, "You don't love me, you don't want to be with me, I hate the union, you're never home." To a daughter who just almost verbatim repeated things that I had said. She's now the Chief Steward of the division of where she works in

transportation at Aviation at the city of San Antonio. She's very proud of her mother and a very wonderful mother to my two grand babies.

My daughter is one of the reasons that I'm here. When Jerry McEntee, who was president of AFSCME, called me about this position, I said, "Let me think about it." He said "Call me back." I made one phone call. I called my daughter and I said, "If I win, I would have to move away from here. If I win, your brother would have to stay with you for a while because I'd be on the road all the time. But it's a long shot." She says, "Mother, you have to do this. You'll never get another chance like this, right? Can you imagine all the good that you can do?" We were both crying. She's given me such wonderful support.

But my life in the labor movement has not been easy. It cost me a marriage because I dedicated my life to the labor movement and something had to suffer. Of course, my life with my children suffered as well. They talk about quality time, but it's also quantity. I didn't have all of the time. I did have wonderful support from my first husband for the children. He was and is a wonderful father. But our relationship suffered. I grew up and away. We're still good friends. He's always been very supportive of the children and an adoring grandfather for the two kids. He was very helpful to my daughter, when she raised her first child by herself.

And then I found a very wonderful second husband who came out of the labor movement. He was the President of ATU and so he knew that he had a wife who was in the union movement working odd hours. He was offered a position with his union which would require him traveling three weeks out of the month and one week at home. We had been married maybe about a year, and he said, "Nope, I married you to stay with you and to spend the rest of my life with you. There's going to be one politician in this family, and that's you." We were so happy for those seven and a half years. He gave up his career for mine and in fact was my bartender at my first reception running for vice-president of AFSCME. And the week before he died, I said, "Guess what, there's a possibility that I may end up as a Vice President of the AFL-CIO to fill out someone else's term." He said, "Good." Two weeks later he was gone. He died of cancer. I think he knew I was on the road to something. He's probably watching all the things I'm doing. He passed away in April of '93.

I've always been a workaholic. I felt guilty leaving any time before 6:00. I was a very stressed out person. I sometimes think I could have made more time to be with my children. With my son, I did more, I juggled, I had a parent take their child and mine and I would go pick them up. I juggled my time to go to plays and programs. The union didn't fall apart because I spent an hour away or a couple of hours away. And I didn't do that with my daughter. I'm just glad that she turned out to be such a wonderful child. My son is a special ed child so he needed additional attention. He was in the hospital 21 times before he was five years old. So the union allowed me that, to spend time with him. The union leaders of my local were there to support me through some hard times with my son, some hard times when my second husband died. Even through my divorce, there were very supportive members. Sometimes it wasn't easy, but it worked out.

My daughter lives in Texas. My son lives with me. He has some special needs in reading comprehension, and he has some difficulty functioning at the age of 22. Sometimes we have the problems that parents have when their children are 15 or 16, when kids think they can do things but some people take advantage of them. He has money, he works, and some people say, "P.J.'s got money, we'll have him

take us out to lunch or have him foot the bill or have him buy the beers." And I get very concerned about that. So I'm sometimes maybe too protective of him. But it's worked out.

He moved here in May of 1997. He's living with me here, he works at one of the unions in their mail room. And he's doing much better. He waits for me here in my office, and when I'm not here there's someone close by. We go home together. When I'm not here, he knows how to take the Metro and take the bus, a friend of mine carpools with us so she's able to drive him back home, and he does pretty well on his own. He knows how to open cans and make sandwiches, so he pretty much knows how to cook, and he washes his own clothes and he irons his own clothes and everything. You've seen these little steamers that are used by the department stores? I have one of those. You don't have to have an ironing board. I cannot tell you how wonderful it is, because he just hangs that shirt up, he hangs those pants up and he steams them up and he's ready to go. He's meticulous, everything has to match. He somewhat manages his own money. He saves up to buy CDs, like any normal kid. He does well.

The Road Not Taken

If I was to do it over, the one thing I would change is to spend more time with my children. I don't know if I could undo a divorce, because my first husband wanted to stay exactly where he was. And I would have grown up anyway, so maybe that was destined, not to save that marriage. There's nothing in my career that I would undo, even though sometimes it was hard being a woman in the labor movement in Texas. I was in a man's world. And in those days, I was in an Anglo man's world and a little spitfire Mexican-American isn't going to tell them anything that they don't already know. I was discriminated against within the movement and surprisingly many of those people have said so. They say now, "You never backed off, you never lost focus, you were always on target with what you believed in, and boy, did you have a mouth on you. You stuck to your guns no matter how mad we were at you, and we had to respect the fact that you wouldn't let go." I would walk through it again, do it again, everything that I've done, the good and the bad.

But after my husband died, I realized how little time we have. So I dedicated a little bit more time to my grandson at the time. Now I miss my granddaughter, who's the most adorable thing in the world. If I could change anything, I would have spent more time with my children.

Common Ground

I tell people yes, you'll make your family angry that you're not spending enough time, but you're doing it not just for yourselves, you're doing it for them. My daughter was a single working mother and when my grandson was three years old, he didn't want to let her go. She called me and she was crying and she says, "Oh Mom, J.P. wouldn't turn loose of me, he didn't want me to go to work. And I started to think of what I used to do to you. I'm so sorry." I said, "Don't do that, you're going to get me to cry. It's hell, isn't it?" She was just crying up a storm and I said, "Baby, he'll love you, don't worry about that." But she was just heartbroken, because she remembered all the things that she used to say to me.

I figure that I'm doing a lot of good here, being able to bring the labor movement to women who don't have a voice or people of color who don't have a voice. The AFL-CIO was already on board, from the Martin Luther King days to the likes of Caesar Chavez and everybody else. It's just a wonderful opportunity to highlight them and do more.

Janice Weinman
Former Executive Director, AAUW
Senior Consultant, U.S. Department of Education

Janice Weinman was until recently the Executive Director of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), a nationwide grassroots organization of 160,000 members that promotes education and equity for women and girls. Prior to joining AAUW, she was Executive Vice President of the College Board. She has held key educational leadership roles at the local, state, and federal levels. She is currently consulting for the U.S. Department of Education. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Council on Basic Education and the Visiting Committee for the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. She lives with her husband in New York City; her daughter is a freshman in college.

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

I grew up in Manhattan. My parents were Holocaust survivors who came to the United States in 1948. My father was a stockbroker and established his own firm. My mother was a fashion designer, and was very successful—a lot of her work was published in the major magazines. I grew up in a household that was very work-oriented with parents who were very committed to the professions that they were involved in. Despite the fact that they worked very hard, they made a great deal of time for me. I'm an only child.

I went to public schools and at the same time to the Julliard School of Music. I trained to become a professional pianist and I also was a tap dancer. My daughter is now a professional ballet dancer in addition to going to college. She's dancing the main role in the Nutcracker this week.

I went to college at Brandeis University in the 1960s, which was a very activist, progressive institution, and then went to Harvard Graduate School of Education for my doctorate. I was always interested in politics—my parents believed very strongly in democracy and taught me never to take it for granted. They were strong activists in Europe. I grew up in a religious, Jewish-minded family.

I have worked my entire life. My mother also worked and raised me at the same time and I think that I have always felt that one need not be mutually exclusive over the other. I never assumed that I would not work. Nobody in my family ever assumed I would not work. I think the choices revolved more around the kind of job that I was taking in terms of its demands and the time.

My first job was for the New York City Planning Commission. I left to take positions in educational policy in New York and Massachusetts, and then went to work for the U.S. Department of Education. After working in these government positions for ten years, I spent ten years as the Vice President of Academic Affairs at the Fashion Institute of Technology, followed by six years at the College Board. I was always involved in educational policy and advocacy, and my goal was always to try to make a difference.

Juggling

I married late; it was just a matter of finding the right person. The timing was totally a factor of how things played out. I could have married at 20, I could have married at 22. What was always a conscious decision was that I would work. And the fact that I worked even when I attended graduate school was an

indication that working was something I was always going to do.

I had my daughter when I was 35. I was really looking forward to having a child. I was also very involved in my career. I think there is a much greater tolerance for women taking time off when they have a child today than there was when my daughter was born.

I think it is important for women to feel that they can work and that it will not necessarily jeopardize the relationship they have with their husband or their child. I think that it is partially the responsibility of the work environment, but it is also largely the responsibility of the individual herself to be able to do both.

My mother worked and raised me at the same time and I have always felt that one need not be mutually exclusive over the other.

I think that the most difficult part of the balancing process is to fit in other activities if you assume responsibilities beyond your job and raising a child. Political work is something we do as a family and that is how we managed to fit it in. That was the nice part: family activities were standing in the street and convincing the people to vote. Ever since my daughter was little, we went to the street together, we went to the clubhouse together. And that was really our family outing, our family activity. But do you want to go to a movie or to the beach instead? You probably do. Because it's real down time as opposed to time.

I took my daughter to community board meetings, political activities, political club events, voter registration, mobilization, all kinds of activities of that sort. I think the result is that my daughter is extremely independent. She relies on her own inner resources. That is important for women to feel that they can do both.

I worked long hours every day for the last 28 years. I also have worked at home at night and on weekends. And I think that what gets neglected is one's own personal health and one's own private time. I've been tired. But that is a choice I made and I don't think I would change that choice. I do feel I could not have done the balancing of work and home without help that I paid for. Somebody who was there for my daughter, somebody who took care of the home.

You kind of go from one thing to the next. There were times that I just couldn't spend as much time with my daughter as I would have liked. They mature very quickly. They understand what life's exigencies are. And I think that's important.

I wasn't always the boss of my own time, but even so you try to make the days stretch and you stretch the day, actually, and you may shortcut in certain areas, primarily mostly personal rather than for your family or friends. And not much sleep.

And now I'm working in DC while my husband is in New York, and that has been very difficult. The decision to take a job that would require our living apart during the week was a very difficult choice. I think that people who say you can do it all are probably not adequately fulfilling all their responsibilities.

I think most women feel that there is a need for their work to be structured in a way that can allow them freedom and flexibility and an opportunity to spend time with their family. I have always created the additional time that I have had to spend. I pushed myself beyond what people would expect of me, so it has always been an internal and personal drive. I think that I have been able to do that because I am lucky to have a husband who can provide support.

I also have an added dimension, and that is I am religious, and so that is another very, very big demand. There are times that I cannot work, there are times where I have to miss work, there are times where I am not available for things and most other people are. But in my case, it has been a wonderful excuse because when I cannot work that forces me to be with my family and it forces me to completely put work aside, and not even think about it or deal with it. But that's very, very unusual.

I've been in this job a year and a half. I have had additional dimensions that most women who work do not have. I have the demand of commuting. So there are things in this equation that are very, very different. And being an only child, I had to deal with parents as well, so I have always had many, many multiple demands.

Myth and Reality

Many women bring their work home with them in their minds. I have known women who work very long hours, and I have known women who have not had to work on weekends or after eight o'clock at night.

I have just spent a weekend with a friend who has also worked her entire life. She has many children—two children with her first marriage and three through her second. There are a lot of children and there are a lot of issues, and she has always worked hard and on the weekends. I think what has affected her is not her children. She has done a terrific job. But the fact that she is worn out, worn down. I have a friend who has worked only partially and now has three children. She has worked as a designer, so it is easier. But I do not see that the stresses are any different, which is what is interesting. I don't think that the amount of time and the level of the job necessarily differentiate the amount of stress that you have at home or otherwise. I think that women who have more responsible jobs probably are women who can handle stress more, and therefore can handle that position.

The Road Not Taken

I've lived the life I wanted to live. I can't say that I would want anything very different for my daughter than I have had for myself. I was able to make choices and I hope she will be able to. I had the freedom of where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do because I had that support from my husband.

There are a lot of women who have done it without their husband's support or a man's support, but I think that it is much harder. It is really much harder. Even if you talk to some of the famous people, some of the real leaders, they will really tell you that, when all is said and done. Bella Abzug had a husband who supported her. Betty Friedan didn't. She struggled. She will tell you she struggled. You know Gloria Steinem's story is a struggle. It is not necessarily an easy story. For me, the greatest struggles have been in the workplace because of the challenges of the institution—not the challenges of the people—rather than in the support that I got. I have really been lucky.

The greatest repercussion of my working as hard as I have is that I only have one child and not more. In an ideal world, I would have had at least one more child.

Common Ground

I have a lot of friends from college, and all of them chose to work. We have talked about the fact that we have not addressed our own personal needs. We have not had the time to deal with ourselves. We put our parents ahead of us. We've put our families ahead of us. I

see some interesting physical patterns among women my age. I think many of us had menopause much earlier than our mothers because of this stress. Many of us will retire earlier than our mothers did, in fact, because we will be burnt out.

I have had young women ask my advice about the timing of marriage and having children. I have had women ask me that who are in college or graduate school or recently graduating. I think the women that I have met who are younger are very, very driven. They are very, very directed. They have absolutely no intention of staying at home. All of my friends' children expected their mothers to work and expect to work. There was no ambiguity as far as those expectations. The young men that I know also have expectations that their wives are going to work. I think they have grown up in a world in which that is pretty much expected. I think in many cases now, the young men that I know are relying on women to contribute.

One of the things that I believe women face is that they have to use part of the money that they make to support their ability to work, whether it is a housekeeper, whether it is a nanny, whether it is going to have your hair done rather than doing it yourself because of the nature of the job.

One of the things that AAUW is undertaking is that we are taking a look at the transitions in women's lives and trying to understand better the way in which education can facilitate those transitions. And I feel very, very strongly that the intersection between various points in a woman's life in terms of the choices she makes and her decisions relate to the kind of education she has gotten. We are going to be taking a look at some of the issues that women are dealing with and how education fits. What is interesting also is that I see women at different socioeconomic levels dealing with the same issues in different ways.

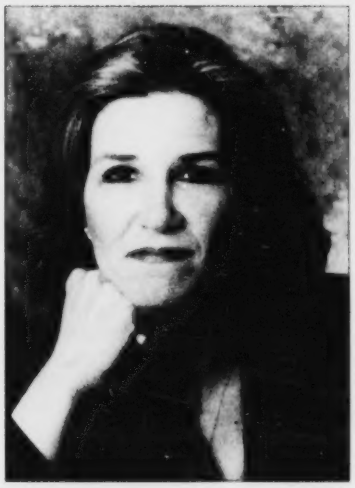
I enjoy working. I think some women have a greater sense of dependence on their work as a means of fulfilling their own interests. I think some women work because they psychologically need the reinforcement that work gives them. I think there are also many women who work because financially they have to and for whom work is simply a matter of contributing to that. I think the women who are most vulnerable are those women who work in order to have financial support. They are trapped, in a way. They are trapped by the inflexibility of being able to move to a better job potentially, or not working at all, or trying to see how they can move up in order to make more money. I think that is a terrible dilemma for women because it constrains them differently than men.

I have found that some women who don't work take on a persona of guilt. They really feel they have to explain why they don't work or they have to explain why it is better for their children that they are at home. They don't have to prove to me or to anybody why they have made that choice. They have made that choice, and that is their choice.

Many women have not yet achieved the level of security whereby they feel they can help other women. They are still struggling themselves. They are still fighting up the corporate ladder. AAUW is so important because AAUW fosters support. ◆

A few weeks after this interview, Janice Weinman left AAUW. She is currently a senior consultant to the U.S. Department of Education.

Mary Matalin
Political Strategist and Commentator



Mary Matalin first gained national attention as the deputy manager of the Bush-Quayle re-election campaign in 1992. In 1993, she married James Carville, President Clinton's 1992 campaign manager, with whom she co-authored the best-selling political campaign book, All's Fair: Love, War, and Running for President. *She hosted her own three-hour radio program on the CBS Talk Radio Network, as well as the political weeknight cable television talk show,* Equal Time. *She is currently a political strategist and frequent political commentator. She lives in Virginia with her husband and two daughters.*

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

I grew up on the South Side of Chicago. I lived in a very ethnic blue-collar neighborhood, where everyone worked in the steel mill. My father and godfather (for whom I'm named, my full name is Mary Joe, for Joe Kaminski), the day they graduated from high school they rode their bikes to U.S. Steel and they worked there every day for the rest of their lives until the mill closed. I have one brother and one sister. I'm the oldest.

My mother didn't work 'til we were all in school, and then she went to beauty school. And given the age and our location, blue collar middle America, women didn't work. So it was a big deal, no other mothers on my block worked. I was always very proud of that. She chose to work in a situation that would fit her family in—she never ended up doing hair, she was terrible, but she ran the beauty school, so she would bring me in on nights and on Saturdays to do the books. I started working when I was 11. So I had a sense of not just work and responsibility, but women in the work environment, and the camaraderie, and the sense of accomplishment.

Given blue collar middle America and no expectations, it was a big deal that I even went to college. My Dad went on the GI bill, but my mother was not allowed to go to college, or even nursing school. My mother worked because she had a very active mind. She wanted to do something. She was always doing something. I remember the night Nixon resigned, we were at a ceramics class together. Or she took bass lessons, or she took violin lessons. Even the summer before she died, she died in September, she was going to Purdue to take economics classes.

She loved all the women on the block. I have these endearing and enduring memories that when the husbands would leave, the women would all gather around the kitchen table, drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes. They'd throw a load of wash in and they'd come up and have another butt. They'd take it out, and bring it out and hang it on the back line and have another cup of coffee and another butt. And so the world went. I remember her laughing, and it was a great life. No one on the block needed money, in the sense that everybody progressed along the same way. All the houses were the same. All the men were blue collar workers. They made good wages and they had simple needs. When my mother started working, it wasn't for the income, but since she had the income we then did a quantum leap over everybody else on the block, we got new furniture, we got a new car.

We lived in South Chicago, which is the bad part of town. I remember when I was 18, 19 years old and had a year of college, I was downtown with my then-boyfriend, and I

remember looking at a skyscraper, saying to myself, "Some day, I'm going to be a secretary to a big businessman." And that was my aspiration. And I thought, "I'll never make it, I'll never be able to do that." That's just the way it was.

My other goal was to be in a job where I wouldn't be bored. Because much as I appreciated the experience of having worked in a steel mill, and the income and the stability, it was the damn boringest stuff, particularly for women. We had to do key punch jobs, data entry or filing, and you just watched the clock creeping by, you lived for your 10:00 coffee break, and then your lunch break, then 3:00 coffee break. If I ever have any ambition for anything, it is to work in a job where I'm not bored. So obviously politics fills that bill. That was as much as I can remember having any aspirations, and it didn't occur to me then to be in a hurry to have kids, to get married and all that.

I didn't think of work as a liberating thing. If you didn't work you didn't eat.

I graduated from high school in 1971. I went to Western Illinois University, which is in a farm community. I needed to go to the cheapest state school that there was, and I wanted to go to the school farthest away—I didn't really like high school, I didn't go my senior year. I went to college for a year, dropped out, went again, dropped out, in and out. I really didn't know what I wanted to do. My cultural roots were in the steel mill. Every time I'd go back to work with the intention of getting the money to go back to school, then I'd get a sports car, and goofy stuff like that. I finally graduated in 1978. I had endless majors, a lot of graduate work.

One course that I took changed my life. One professor gave us an assignment, one paper, you could chose the topic. He said, "Here's a topic I think you should do: Is there a trend toward conservatism today?" And I said, of course there wasn't. But the more I studied it, the more I realized there was a conservative trend and that I was a conservative. I had thought I was a hippy and a liberal, and a socialist utopian.

I didn't think of work as a liberating thing. If you didn't work, you didn't eat. When I was in college, I waitressed, I cocktail waitressed, I was a research assistant, a librarian, but my mainstay job, my best paying job was to be a clerk in a day old bread store. You could have free bread. My sister and I lived together, and I can remember times when all we had to eat was bread and jelly, that was it, or peanut butter. You don't work, you don't eat. That's just how it was.

What got me to where I am was the fluke of following my gut. In college I kept esoteric interests, but I always gravitated to some practical applications. I took a Campaigns and Elections graduate course, for which you had to go to work on an election campaign. That was the whole course. I loved it, immediately loved it. The teacher put me in charge of the Republican side of the class. This was a '76 presidential election, and we did local stuff, but it was just love at first sight, thoroughly exciting and captivating.

But I didn't think I could make a living in politics. Working on a campaign meant driving people to the polls and calling voters. In those days, women didn't make a living at it. It seemed hideously impractical and unstable. After graduate school, I went to beauty school, so that I could help my mother run the school—she was getting sick at the time. Then, out of the blue, my former teacher from the Campaigns and Elections course called me up to work on a U.S. Senate race. It was 1980 and I

was 26. And I worked for pennies, and loved it, loved it. Our candidate, Dave O'Neill, won the primary against a sitting senator, Charles Percy, and then lost in the general election.

A couple of pivotal things happened during that time. First, my mother died very prematurely—she was 49 years old—unexpectedly, in the middle of that campaign. She was the love of my life, my best friend. It was tragedy beyond tragedy to me. And the second thing was a woman was running that campaign, a big, nationally targeted race, and a thrilling, pivotal year, 1980. It was unheard of. There weren't even women in politics. I had never seen a woman operate like that in a man's world. She had so much flair, and she was a single mother. Here's a woman doing exactly what I wanted to do with more flair than I ever dreamed imaginable, and a single mother to boot. She never whined about anything, and had total command of the situation and was brilliant in a practical way. It was just such an epiphany, at a time when I was so not just impressionable but vulnerable because of this death. And after the campaign, I got my father settled as best as I could. Then I called this woman, Maxine Feinstrom, who had just moved back to Washington, and she got me a job, sight unseen. I moved to Washington, and the rest is, as they say, history.

I was not thinking of marriage, although I did get married when I was 30, but it was stupidity. I think we were married for three days—a year or something like that. I liked the companionship of men. I didn't not like kids, they just didn't do anything for me.

My father didn't raise me as a boy, but he would say things like, "You got this world by the tail and you can do anything you want to do." Although the horizons for that were limited. You can do anything you want to do, but what might that be? He'd say things like, "Kids are a big responsibility, you don't want to have kids. You know what a pain in the ass that is." In a subliminal way, he kind of discouraged my ever having kids. My mother would have been the one pushing us toward that, if she had lived. But she didn't.

Campaigns are for people who don't have families. The campaign becomes your family. If you're very family-oriented, as I always was growing up and am now, being in a campaign is the perfect entity for your existence. Because you're all working toward a common goal, and it works best when everyone loves and trusts each other and you get really close—you're in a fox hole. Working as I did, for as long as I did, put off having my own family. You invest emotionally in that.

Until I met James (Carville), I had a lot of boyfriends and they were always fun companions, but I went head over heels for James. He was 49 and I was 40 when we got married, so we didn't even think about having kids. And I just got pregnant, and I had a miscarriage before Matty, and we were just devastated. And we've been actively trying since. As fast as we could before I got too old. Matty was born when I was 41 and Emma when I was 46. You never think you're old until you go to do something and you can't do it. I've never not been able to do whatever I wanted to do, physically. It stunned me that it took me three years to have this second baby.

I'm shocked on an hourly basis by how doting I am on these kids. I'm just overflowing with love for them. James and I are both shocked—we just live and die for these guys. He's shocked at himself, I'm shocked at him, we're both shocked at me. We sit around saying, "Did you ever think we'd be such devoted parents?" And amazingly, all my friends who never had kids are all maternal now. It's like our family is the family to share for everybody.

Juggling

Washington is a very high powered, a high-ambition-for-women town. Family is not the center point, like it is where James comes from or where I came from. At our base, which is what you marry, you don't marry somebody for what they do for a living. What he is as a person is the best son of the best mother that ever existed, the oldest of 8 kids. Which is why we live out on the farm in Virginia. We have 94 acres, and cows. Everybody knows everybody. It's the perfect place, and the reason we moved here is because this is where we want to raise our kids. Having said that, I don't regret and nor does he a nanosecond of the four decades of quasi-decadence. It was a great, phenomenal experience and I miss it and I hope to be able to do some limited campaign work in the future.

I took Matty everywhere. She had 21,000 air miles before she was three months old.

My second child just turned four months. I've given up the radio show and I took four months maternity leave. When I go back to work after Labor Day, here's how we'll do it. The place we rent in Washington is on a block where there are scores of children, it's fabulous. They're all the same age and all the moms are popping their second ones, so all of our first and second ones are the same age. There's a very fabulous pre-school there, which Matty is going to start this year and all her friends are going to go two half days a week. I have great, in-house care, she loves my babies and I get to spend endless time with them. We have an office in the English basement of our house, so I walk downstairs, as does my husband, into our office. I come up and visit them, and Matty comes down to the office all the time. She works on the computer, and picks up the phone: "James Carville's office," takes a message, and hangs up. We all live and work together. We also picked this location because it's five minutes from the airport and five minutes from the train. A lot of work I do is speaking and traveling. We just rearranged everything for our major physical convenience.

I took Matty everywhere. She had 21,000 air miles before she was three months old. I don't take this one with me as much. With Matty, I had the TV show at 8:30 every night, from when she was a year and a half. So I did the radio show from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. and did TV at 8:30. I'd hang with her in the morning, most of the day, and then she would take a long nap, and she'd stay up and watch the TV show. To this day, she stays up later than everybody. She watched political shows, that's what she did from birth on, and listened to the radio show. And the radio studio they built for me was within walking distance, a few blocks from my house. So she'd come out and hang out at the radio studio.

The way I have to do it to do things that I like to do is to make it all physically fit together, otherwise you can wear yourself down running hither and yon. When I go back, I'm not going to do that structured 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. every day and every night show, because not only is it hard work, I need a break from the politics, or what is considered politics today. What James and I are doing together now, it's incredibly symbiotic functioning here, is international consultancies, and we have presidential races all over South America and Latin America. You can do a lot by e-mail and fax and long distance, and make a couple of trips each month. You can't run it day to day like you do campaigns here, but it's fabulous and I like doing it with him. We're on the same side. He is brillant, he's more than brillant, he's the best that ever was at this business.

The political conflicts between us don't get balanced. The advantage is to the male.

There's no point in whining about it, it just is. When I was asked to volunteer on the Dole campaign—I was going to do it anyway—within 24 hours some Cro-Magnon right wing nut says, "She's sleeping with the enemy." I had been married for 3 years, I had one kid. I was not in a pivotal role, just volunteering in strategy meetings and stuff like that. They went bonkers, and the campaign manager called me and said, "We can't take this heat," and I said, "OK, I resign." So Dole calls me and asks, "What the hell are you doing?" I said, "Your guy told me I had to resign." So he says we'll do this and that and I end up doing what he wanted anyway. The point is there are enough people who think I am Mata Hari, and James never got that. They never questioned his honor, his integrity, his loyalty, his professional capacity because he was in love with me, married me. It was irrelevant vis a vis James. It's not irrelevant in my case. I consider it blatant, residual sexism.

Between mid-September and mid-November, I think I probably have 35 or 40 speeches, so I will be on the road almost twice a week. And we're going to have to make a trip to Argentina and probably one to Brazil. But then from Thanksgiving through Christmas, we're just out here on the farm and then we have another frantic two months. We're seasonal workers, like grape pickers. Some of those trips I will take Matty and/or Emma.

We all get up at seven and Matty and I chat and everyone does their morning business, and I feed them and we talk and read some books, and then the babysitter comes at nine o'clock. I go downstairs and do some computer work and have lunch with them and then go back down, and then she starts coming around in the afternoon. That's a typical day. Then we wrap it up around six and we all go out to dinner. If a person gets the option of being home more, it is me. So I will be home every weekend and I am home by choice more than he is.

I don't expect to be a political director again. If George W. Bush runs and if he wants me to work for him in some capacity, I will find some way to do it. I don't have that as a career any more, but I do have it as a passion. James would never deny me that. I will find a way to make the kids and my husband and that fit together, if he gets in and they want me. But I would never be a political director again for a number of reasons. One, I already did it. Two, I don't want to invest that kind of emotion—I don't want to put it there, instead of here. And it's financially irresponsible—nobody makes money on campaigns. Plus, when you do that, you smoke cigarettes and you drink wine, and if you can't do all the stuff that goes with it, and hang out every night and tell war stories, then it's not the same job.

As the kids get older, you have more freedom, even though you keep wanting to spend your time with them because they get increasingly interesting. Maybe this works for me, to not have a plan, because my whole life worked without a plan. I just always go by my guts, but not everybody can go like that. I never force anything, I just wait until the time feels right. That has always worked for me jobwise, and kidwise, and manwise and housewise. You got to give yourself some latitude to trust your gut, and a lot of women don't do that. The best thing that could happen for women in the new millennium is to rely more on what they have more of, which is good instincts. You know brainwise we have better instincts and intuitions than men do. And we reject relying on it, and it's just a phenomenal power.

Myth and Reality

I know what makes me tick. I must work, and I must spend, I don't want to say quality time,

you can't carve out time. Every hour is quality. You have to spend hangout time. We don't talk to each other, we don't do anything. You can't say what works for me is going to work for anybody else. I do have a unique situation in not having kids until I was 41 and 45 and having an iconoclastic but very exciting career. I've been there and done that. And as thrilling as it was, I did reach, by my definition, the pinnacle of what I wanted to do in politics, to be George Bush's political director. I wanted to be a national political director. I did that. I know these rewards exceed those, although I wouldn't compare them because that was the best there was for me at that time. But if I were younger in this situation, I might be frustrated.

I've never had difficulty communicating or interacting with or relating to women who made other choices. I have difficulty in relating to women who think they don't have any choices.

I'm old enough to know that the grass is not greener on the other side. So, I don't try to do everything. I just know what works for me. In the next couple years, I will keep finding my way. I have occasional pockets of frustration when I'm trying to do something when one of the girls wants to sit on my lap and one is crying. But I remember I interviewed an author on my show last year, who said if you are a mother and you want to work or you have other interests, you just have to submit. You cannot get frustrated, you have to live on somebody else's time. She said resignation is the watch word. And if you do that, it is pleasant resignation, and if you don't do that, you're going to end up having to tend to them anyway, but it's resentful resignation.

We can't do anything right, and there is no right way to do it, so why do we self-flagellate? For all their pain that the stay-at-home moms had to suffer, now they're fighting back with the same thing, saying that you're not a good mom. Well, that's stupid. Don't force it to be one way or the other, or the third way, which is that you have to balance everything. No, you don't, something is going to go! You're either not going to have your legs shaved every day, or you're not going to have a clean house, or your kids are going to be messy kids, or a messy household.

Common Ground

I talk to my sister 50 times a day. The friends I have now are the same I've had since 1980 when I moved to Washington. There's no difficulty staying friends with women who have made different choices. The cause of my rejection of early feminism is that it rejected motherhood as an honorable option. Women like my sister, who has a 150 IQ and is a saint, she teaches learning disabled kids, and she felt like a failure when she stayed home for ten years to raise her own kids, and it just pained me. And my college friend, Katie, did the same thing. And there's no reason for these women, whom I knew to be brilliant, to be dissed. So, I always revered the choices that my sister and Katie and those kind of girls made.

I've never had difficulty communicating or interacting with or relating to women who made other choices. I have difficulty in relating to women who think they don't have any choices. I can't relate to women who look at life as an opportunity to be victimized. There are a lot of whiners out there. Some sort of insecurity limits their options. I know there's poverty too, but I'm talking about a mind set.

At parties, people won't talk to you when you don't have power. Washington is nothing but a power town. I'm not a power person now, and

I choose not to be. Why would I want somebody else to raise my baby? I had five miscarriages to have two. I saw Matty's first steps, and I saw Emma roll over for the first time. I could spend day after day just doing stuff with my girls. The girls and I have gotten close to this girl who runs an antique or whimsy shop. She used to be a waitress. I like women like that, who just make the best and don't let things stop them. My mother always said, "Honey, you ain't a beauty, but you have to make the best with what you've got."

There shouldn't be any kind of financial penalty for being married or staying home. But just generally, in my view, less government is better government. I like a lot of private sector solutions. My sister, when she first had her kids and her husband was getting his Ph.D., and they had no money, she took in kids. Those little neighborhood things definitely work. These women are worth their weight in gold, and people are finally starting to pay them well.

The way that women help women is door to door, neighborhood to neighborhood. What we do in our neighborhood is we're just there for each other. And it's not just women. That's why you like to live in neighborhoods. We have a gay couple that lives next door, and Matty's there all the time, hanging out with them. Everyone in the neighborhood takes care of everyone else. Not only is that good for them, it's good for us. How people can help is to quit passing judgement on whatever kind of lifestyle is chosen. I don't believe that it takes a village, although I love Mrs. Clinton, if the village includes bureaucrats. It takes a village in the sense of the better your immediate community, the better for them.

Gail Shaffer
Chief Executive Officer
Business and Professional Women, USA

Gail Shaffer is the Chief Executive Officer of Business and Professional Women USA, the leading advocate for working women. BPW/USA was founded in 1919 and focuses on economic issues such as pay equity, child care, pension reform, and affirmative action. Prior to coming to BPW, Ms. Shaffer was the Secretary of State for New York. She is also past president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, past president of the Center for Women in Government, and a former national board member of Women Executives in State Government.

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

I grew up in a town of 250 people. I actually went to a one-room schoolhouse. People don't think that a New York town could possibly be that small. A bar and a gas station, that's all, we don't even have a general store anymore.

My mother was a school teacher and she did not marry until she was 37, which in her generation was quite unusual. So she had this career and then she got married and had kids. So, I always thought that I'll be married, I have lots of time, mom didn't have her children till she was 38 and 40.

I worked as an editor for a small family-owned publisher, and then I worked in state government. I never expected I would still be single at this age. I turned 50 this year. So much of my life has been spent in the intensity of the political/government arena. When I was elected Town Supervisor, I was 27. I worked for Mario Cuomo when he was Lieutenant Governor, running his Rural Affairs Council. I was elected to the State Assembly when I was about 32. And then I was Secretary of State for New York when Cuomo became governor, when I was 34. It was a lot of intensity, moving up in a career trajectory.

In every level of my career in government, there were so few women to share things with. When I was elected Town Supervisor, I was the first woman ever in that role, and then I got to the County Legislature and I found that I was the only woman on that board. There was a short line for the ladies' room, that was about the only advantage to that. And then in the State Assembly, there were nine of us out of 150. We even had to lobby for several years to get a ladies' room near the chamber. Even in the Cabinet, there were very few women in the Cabinet when I was Secretary of State. It did give me the opportunity in that role to raise the consciousness of people and have hearings on issues. We had hearings on child care, on the feminization of poverty, and child support enforcement laws. Without us there, those issues would never have been put on the front burner because most of the legislature and the cabinet were men and those issues weren't on their radar screen.

Juggling

Sometimes I just don't know how the women who are also balancing children and spouses do it, because I feel stressed out as a single person. I do have other family obligations. I have a lot of elderly folks in my family. My mother passed away 12 years ago; my father is 82. My uncle, who lives with my father on the farm, is 81. I have another uncle who lived with us until he died at 90; my aunt was 87, and they were both single. I have been put in the position of nurturer and caregiver for many elderly relatives, including my parents, and that has often become a real issue of balancing and fitting those obligations into your career. It is

very difficult. And when you have young children, and these people in our generation, the sandwich generation, are juggling both of them and having a career, it's overwhelming. When you have a culture that doesn't have a support system like some other industrialized nations do, it exacerbates it.

I was Secretary of State and I was very fortunate in that I was CEO of my organization, so I had more flexibility. But still it is a lot. My father is 82, and he is really sharp for his age, but he's been through four heart operations, he's had prostate cancer; he's been through a lot of health crises. He's a miracle of modern medicine. He is still walking around. He is very young at heart. Those things are great. My aunt was very good and my uncle was very good up until his last year. But whenever they have a health crisis, you have to be there. My mother, when she passed away, went through six weeks of very intense crises. I had both my mother and my father in separate hospitals at the same time. It was the worst time I had ever been through in my life. I was very fortunate that in a CEO role, I had more flexibility. I had people I could delegate things to, and my family was the priority, and that was it, that was where I wanted to be. Fortunately, I had a very good, supportive staff.

In every level of my career in government, there were so few women to share things with. There was a short line for the ladies' room, that was about the only advantage.

For everybody, there are times when those pressing priorities conflict and you have to determine which priority is absolutely the most pressing. I remember when my mom and dad were in the hospital, my father was in New York City having his heart operation and my mother was in the hospital in Albany. There were a couple of times when I couldn't be somewhere where I normally would have felt it was really important to be. But this was more of a priority because it was a life and death situation. There are environments where you could be fired for not being there. I feel that women, as they come into higher roles in corporate policy, can make an impact on more humane attitudes in the corporate executive suite. That's my hope.

Since my mother married late, I wasn't worried when I was unmarried in my 30s. And then I hit 40, and then I hit 45. So when I hit my sort of early to mid forties, I started thinking about maybe adopting children. That was a real, real deliberative thought process because I would have loved to have children. But I determined that I didn't feel that I could do justice to those children without a partner. I'm in awe of the single mothers who do balance their work and children without a partner. Parenting is such a huge obligation. I decided I couldn't do it alone. I admire people who can. But it is a big trade-off you've made when you hit that point in your life, where you're thinking, "I may not ever find Mr. Right," and you would have liked to have had a family.

Being single is a very mixed bag in the political arena. When I ran for the State Assembly, I know that my opponent circulated a rumor that I was probably a lesbian because I wasn't married. This was in a rural area, where this would be very much a negative. I remember my opponent's wife wrote a letter to the editor in our local newspaper saying I could not possibly be an Assembly Member because I had never raised children and I would not be a good representative on family issues—plus, of course, I was pro-choice. In the political arena, I think it helps to have a family in two senses: it is a plus with voters, and it's also a support network. The balancing thing is sort of a two-

edged sword. If you are married, it is tough to balance because you have these family obligations. If you are single, it's tough, because you have no real support network. If you have a partner you can confide in or who can occasionally fill the gap on something, whether it's picking up the dry cleaning or getting the car fixed, that is such a help. When you are single in that role, it is so difficult. I remember telling my fellow female cabinet officers, what we need is a time-share wife.

And the other issue in political life is when you are a single woman in a "power position." Politics is the ultimate power arena: you have this title and it becomes a real obstacle to even developing a relationship, because men in our society are still intimidated and turned off by title because our culture tells them they need to be superior in a relationship. Whether it's the Secretary of State, or even the Assemblywoman, or the woman who is CEO of a corporation—it takes a very secure male ego to deal with that and get beyond that so that you can see that person as a human being and whether there is something that attracts you to one another, that this could be a great relationship. If a male is in politics, it's that power aphrodisiac, but if a woman is in politics, it is this total turn off. So women in politics who are single tend to feel fairly isolated. It is very difficult to have some kind of social life. Not just because of the balancing, the traveling and all that, but that whole ego factor, that contrasts with this whole social order of things that's the norm.

I think I'm too much of a workaholic. Women are often perfectionist, and we work long hours. If you're single, you can fill those hours with work, because you can never get everything done. When I was in the Cabinet, I definitely felt that the Governor and his staff would automatically call on Gail to go do this weekend speaking engagement out in Buffalo because, you know, Gail, after all, isn't married. They knew I did not have children. I had my Mom and Dad and I'd go to the farm whenever I could, but if you're single, it's assumed that you can put in those extra hours. We can just fit her in any slot. There were other factors, too, but definitely being single added to the likelihood that they would expect me to step in at the drop of a hat for any assignment, anywhere, at any time. They never hesitated to intrude on my private time.

Myth and Reality

We all as individuals have to try to balance our lives better. You do make a decision that you're going to focus very intensely on a career, so perhaps you can't later say, I didn't make a good decision. I guess the real point of all this is that it is so much of a decision for women, while men are not forced to make those decisions. Men don't have to make a choice between one and the other. So why are we still forcing such a choice on women, such a difficult balance?

There are startling moments where we see how this new generation has this whole different setup of images. I remember when a colleague in the State Legislature met with a class of visiting elementary school students. She said to them, "We have a hundred and fifty members here, how many do you think are women?" And this little girl goes, "Half?" And she says, "No it's not half, we don't have that many." And another little kid says, "Why? Is there a test?" And then we said, "If there were tests, at least half of them would be women." But it was just such a revelation, because in my generation we wouldn't have expected many women in there, certainly nowhere near half! But this is a whole new generation, which is seeing women in these different roles.

The Road Not Taken

If I had to do it over again, I don't know if I would change any of my decisions. I definitely would have had a career—it just would not have been me to not do that. I was just this driven person all my life: I was valedictorian of my college class, I was always this type A driven personality, and I had this ingrained idea, because of my mother having had a career, that quite naturally I was going to have a career. I think that the surprise to me is that I didn't also have the family. I kid a lot that partly it's looking for Mr. Perfect instead of Mr. Right. But it's also that the choices you make about career do have an impact on the opportunity to marry and have a family. I don't think they were conscious decisions. It was always, "Oh, I have plenty of time for that, and it will all come together." And you get into such an intense career that you know you're not focusing on that, and suddenly you're 40, and then you're 45, and then you're 50. I still haven't given up. I am 50 but that doesn't mean that this will never happen. But it's also less likely to happen at this age.

The real point is, why should women be making such a trade-off either way? Men don't have to make these trade-offs, and women do.

I don't believe in going back and saying, "Oh, if I'd done this or that differently." Because I really, I truly was so motivated by these issues that I got involved in. I wanted to change the world. It's a very deep passion in me to get involved in issues and change things and make a difference, because it was like being a voice for people who didn't have a voice. It was important at that time. So it's not that I regret any of that. It was a wonderful opportunity to make a real impact in public policy, and I met some wonderful friendships. But there certainly are limitations that it puts on having a social life that leads to that balance, so I guess if anything, with the wisdom of more age and experience, looking back, I would probably try to make more time to balance my life better. I am an example of the person who probably did not do enough balancing. But there were always those particular obstacles that the political world imposes on your life, too, as a woman, as a single woman. I'm sure that there are women who are married with children who may look back and say, "I didn't make partner because I had children." But I'm sure that most of them would say it was probably worth that trade-off.

The real point is, why should women be making such a trade-off either way? Men don't have to make these trade-offs, and women do. I think that's what just seems so unfair to us, that we should have the same equal opportunities and also the ability to have a full family life, just as men do.

Common Ground

I think that we have to very much respect each other in the different choices we've made. The whole idea of the women's movement was to create an environment where women could have the same kinds of choices that men have, where women could develop to their full potential. Just the fact that my mother in her time became a school teacher was subconsciously a huge factor for me, thinking that there were definitely career possibilities besides having a family.

It's important that we try not to stereotype women who've made whichever choices they've made. If they have chosen the path of having a career, that is something in their being that they truly want to pursue. If a woman makes a choice to stay at home and raise her

children, that is an equally valid choice. I don't think it is fair to try to make one or the other the right choice. I think the whole idea was to give us these opportunities to flourish in our full personhood in whatever direction that takes us. But it is troubling that there are these portrayals now like the Mommy Trap kind of stereotyping. I don't think we've figured out how to overcome all that. We certainly aren't going to overcome it if we penalize one another for those choices.

It's counterproductive to criticize women who have made other choices. If we are not married or if we are not parents, that doesn't mean we don't have an interest in having good parents who produce good children, who are the future of our society. It is the same argument that some people make that senior citizens shouldn't have any interest in the school system because they don't have children. Of course you have an interest in the school system. It is the whole future of your society that you are building. How can you not?

This is a very challenging time for these issues. Women's entry into the workforce is still very recent, particularly with non-traditional roles, and not only men but women are influenced by a society and an attitude that has accumulated over centuries about what these roles are. It is a tough time for men as well, adjusting to all this. But it's not as hard for men as it is for women, and even the most enlightened man doesn't truly understand how incredibly pressurized these women's lives are. It is just not the same life experience. And until we get more of a critical mass of women at the top levels of decision-making, I don't think that the corporate environment is going to be a lot more family friendly.

People are under a lot of stress because they are juggling all these responsibilities, and they don't have any time in their lives to step back and pace themselves more. They feel that if they focus on their career goals, that they are going to sacrifice their families. If they focus on their family goals, they sacrifice their career. They get penalized even if the corporate culture says you can take time off work—maternity leave, elder care, whatever, do you get penalized in the corporate culture as a woman for taking advantage of that? And men aren't making the same compromises and trade-offs; no one expects them to because their role is still very traditional. Even though men are supposedly taking on more responsibility as fathers and family members, the surveys still show that most of it still rests on the women's shoulders.

I lived in France for a couple of years and the women who work in France don't have this kind of problem because they do have child care that is universal and is accessible to everyone. They have some support systems that make this less of a panic issue for them. And that, I think, is a big challenge that we still face in this country.

Carole Simpson
Anchor, ABC's World News Tonight Sunday and Senior Correspondent, ABC News

Carole Simpson is anchor of ABC's World News Tonight Sunday *and an Emmy-winning senior correspondent for ABC News. Her reports on family and social issues have appeared on numerous ABC programs. She is currently on the Board of the Freedom Forum's Newseum, the International Women's Media Foundation, the National Press Foundation, and the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation. She has established several college scholarships for women and minorities pursuing careers in broadcast journalism and created a leadership institute at the African Women's Media Center in Dakar, Senegal. She lives with her husband in Maryland; her son is in college and her daughter recently completed medical school.*

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

I grew up in Chicago. My father was a mail carrier. My mother was a seamstress and took in sewing in our home. I can remember sitting at the foot of her sewing machine, at her knee, working on my numbers and my ABCs and writing my name. It's one of my earliest recollections as a child. I have one sister nine years older than I am. We lived in quite a nice house, because my dad worked two jobs and my mother was taking in sewing. And then they worked very, very hard and bought a six-flat building, and my mother would paint there and would mop the floors on the weekends. I had to go there and help and polish down the banisters and things like that. So I grew up in a household where everybody worked hard. My sister and I were almost reared as only children because there was such an age difference. My mother did not finish ninth grade because her mother died in childbirth and left my mother in charge of seven little brothers and sisters—she was the oldest. She had to quit school and take care of her brothers and sisters in Georgia. My grandfather was a white man who fell in love with a black woman in Georgia in the early 1900s. When he married my grandmother, from that day forward he lived as a black man in the town.

My mother stressed very strongly with her two daughters that we must study hard, that we must have careers. She was very concerned about young black girls being able to take care of themselves, because in our family there were many women whose husbands had abandoned them and left them with children. So she wanted to make sure that we would always be able to take care of ourselves, and that we would have college educations, which she was never able to have.

I can remember my mother was interested in self-improvement. There were these books when I was a little girl, *Spelling Made Easy*, and *English Grammar Made Easy*—kind of like *Windows for Dummies* today. And I can remember her working in her workbooks, and trying to improve herself. She was very concerned about her handwriting and she would practice her handwriting. I haven't thought about it in a really long time—about how much she wanted to improve herself and make sure that her daughters would be intelligent, educated, self-sufficient young women.

She tried desperately hard to teach me how to sew. I was book smart but not good with my hands, and I resisted learning to sew with every ounce of my being. But I did have to learn how to cook, I did have to know how to clean.

My sister was a very talented singer. At age 14, she began taking voice lessons. She was compared to Marian Anderson—she had a gift

of a beautiful mezzo soprano voice. So my parents struggled to get expensive private voice lessons for her and to make Northwestern University School of Music available to her, and she won the Chicagoland Music Festival. To this day, she still has this incredible, incredible voice. But she didn't want to be an opera singer, which everyone said that she should be. So after college, she just threw it all away—that's how my parents saw it, as throwing it all away—and got married, and moved to California and became a music teacher, but never did anything with her voice. And I can remember my mother just being broken hearted, that they had struggled and saved so and made so many sacrifices. And I also made sacrifices as a child, because everything was focused on my sister. She had the beautiful gowns for recitals; I was forced to take piano lessons because I was someday going to be her accompanist. And when my sister abandoned these dreams, I can remember my mother telling me, "Now you have to make us proud of you. You cannot let us down like your sister did."

Of 60 graduates with a degree in journalism, I was the only black, I think there were five women, and everyone got a job but me.

I did everything that I could to try to get my parents' approval of me: I got into plays, I was President of the Student Council. As I look back, what happened with my sister was very useful for me, because it made me work very hard, it made me struggle against odds, it made me want to have some kind of career in which my parents would see that I get recognition from the public. And going into the theater as a child helped me with my voice. Learning how to get up in front of people and not be afraid, learning to express myself on my feet, learning to ad lib—all of that came through this school experience of theater, which was originally just to get my parents' approval. It was immensely satisfying.

I never thought of acting as a career. My mother would have thought it was a waste of time to try to become an actress. I was a reporter for the high school newspaper, and I enjoyed that so much. And I had an English teacher who thought that I wrote very well and encouraged me and asked if I had ever thought of being a newspaper reporter. Of course, for a young black girl, growing up in the fifties in Chicago, the only careers we aspired to were teaching or nursing or social work. The only women reporters that I knew were Brenda Starr and Lois Lane—they were comic strips! But I decided that I wanted to become a newspaper reporter. I had a lot of fights with my parents about this. "Are you crazy? You want to work for the *Chicago Tribune*? This will never happen." They wanted me to get a teaching degree. But I was very stubborn and very bull-headed, and they relented, and so I majored in journalism. I went to the University of Illinois for two years in Chicago, so my parents could save money so I could go away to school. Then I went to the University of Michigan, where I majored in journalism.

My parents' warnings came back to haunt me when I graduated from college in 1962. Of 60 graduates with a degree in journalism, I was the only black, I think there were five women, and everyone got a job but me. I thought, "This is crazy, this is wrong. You're saying no, I can't do it. I'll show you I can do it." I went to work at the Chicago Public Library, where I'd worked every summer from the time I was 16. Professor Wesley Maurer, the head of the Journalism Department, felt bad, he was embarrassed, and said he would work all summer long to try to find me a job.

In August, the head of the Department called to tell me he had lined up an internship for me in

Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. I'd grown up in Chicago, I'd lived and worked in an integrated situation all my life. George Wallace had just been elected governor of Alabama. But it was the only job that I had, and it turned out to be a really good job. I was editor of the information bureau, sending out press releases about the college activities. I taught journalism and I was advisor to the student newspaper. It was a terrific, terrific experience because I saw the civil rights movement happen. I had to learn about the whole rural South and it was a tremendous experience.

I was there for two years and then decided that if I go to graduate school and get another degree, they'll have to hire me. I got a fellowship to the University of Iowa. It was there that I had a two-hour hole in my schedule that I had to fill, and although I was going to be a print journalist, the only course that fit in it was a radio/TV workshop. I loved it. That drama training through high school and college really came in handy, because I knew how to speak for the ear. I had a professor there who said, "You have a unique voice—they're going to need minorities to cover this huge civil rights story. Why don't you think about broadcasting? There aren't any women, there aren't any blacks." And that's when I decided to try broadcasting.

When I started my broadcasting career in 1965, I was 25. In 1966 I got married, to the same husband (James Marshall) I've had now for 32 years. And I was the first woman and the first African American to broadcast news in Chicago, period.

When I married, I kept my name, which was absolutely unheard of in 1966. Of course my parents loved it, but my husband's family didn't like it at all. I liked my name, but the real reason for not changing was I was already established on the air and my bosses asked me to keep my name. But my husband's mother was just outraged.

We had met at the University of Michigan, and then I had gone to Alabama, and he went to the state of Washington and then to California, but we remained friends and stayed in contact. In fact, I was twice engaged to other people before he and I got back together. But he was someone that I knew I could have fun with. He was not someone that made bells and whistles go off. My mother told me, "This is the man for you. He's smart, comes from a good family, he works hard, you have a good time together, he's your friend. All of that is so much more important than this love, love, love, love, love." And she was right.

Juggling

We have an empty nest just this past fall—my son went away to college. We're rediscovering ourselves, and why we got married in the first place. It's so nice, because we still like each other and have a good time, although our interests are very different. When people ask me how I have balanced work and family in the kind of very stressful job that I'm in, I always tell them I married the right man. That's what you have to do to make it work.

I got married because I wanted someone to share my life with, share my problems with. I wasn't interested in children because I was going to be the big career woman. We had a great time for four years, and when I was 28 suddenly, overnight, my clock was ticking and went crazy, and I thought if I wasn't going to have a baby I would die. And he's asking, "Where is this coming from? What happened to you?" I would see baby commercials for diapers, and I would go crazy. It must be hormonal, because as I said it was never in my plan. He wasn't keen on this, our life was fine, we traveled, we had money to do things. Why

complicate our lives with a child? And it was like, "I don't know, I just gotta have one." So I got pregnant, and continued to work until a few weeks before my daughter was born.

My daughter was born in 1971. I had been covering the Chicago conspiracy trial for five CBS radio stations. When the trial started, I was three months pregnant, and having terrible morning sickness. I was alternating runs to the telephone to file with runs to the bathroom to throw up. But I continued to work, and people looked at me like I was crazy. "What is wrong with you? Shouldn't you be in hiding somewhere with your feet propped up?"

When people ask me how I have balanced work and family . . . I always tell them I married the right man.

Most of my friends from high school and college married right afterwards. Our lives were very different. All my work colleagues were men, and they were very resentful of me. They realized that I had been hired because I was an exotic, I was a black female. So, I didn't have close friends. Plus, I was working very, very hard to carve out my niché and to make my mark. I would volunteer to stay late. I would hear a fire engine and follow it. And again, I had a supportive husband. We'd be in the car and I'd hear a fire engine and he'd go take me there. We've had dinner parties where I've had to get up and leave him with the guests because I'd been called in. He's always been there and he's always understood what was required of my job and what was required of me to make it, and has always been supportive of that.

At the time we married, he was a nuclear engineer at Argone National Laboratory in Chicago. He moved from GE in California to Chicago so that we could get married. While he was at Argone, he also worked on his MBA at the University of Chicago. In 1974, after I had moved to television from radio, and did local news in Chicago, I was offered an opportunity to join the network and to move to Washington. That was my dream—to work for network television and to cover news that affects people all over the United States, even all over the world, and to be in Washington, the news capital of the world. He had just finished his MBA, so it was a convenient time to make the transition. He moved with me, and I promised him that if an opportunity comes up for you that you feel that you cannot refuse, I'll move for you. Fortunately, that hasn't happened, and he carved out a very successful career here in Washington. He was a senior financial vice president for a company, and he is now a consultant in financial services. At the time, his family was so upset. But I have always made more money than he. He's much smarter than I am. He was a scientist, he was in a field that didn't pay that much. He's working on nuclear breeder reactors, but he didn't make the money that I made in broadcasting. It's even in our economic interest to do what my career requires more than what his did. A lot of men that I know who have wives who make more money than they do have a lot of problems with it. Mine never did. He knew it's stupid—it's crazy economic disparity, and that never threatened his manhood.

While I was on maternity leave, I got a call from a local TV station in Chicago, wanting to hire me. I was planning to take six months off, but they wanted me to start sooner. I started my new job when my daughter was three months old. Again, the mess that I went through: "How could you possibly, possibly leave a little tiny baby, three months old, to come to work?" I was fortunate to have a good support system. My parents were still alive, and my mother took care of my daughter during the week. We would take her to my

mother's house on Monday morning, and we would go to my mother's house every night, and we would have dinner with her and put her to bed, and then go home, and then on Friday we would take her for the weekend. It was very hectic—I had carved out a new niche for myself in radio, so now I've got to work really, really hard again to do it in TV. And my husband was working at Argone and going to night school for his MBA. It was really, really hard. My mother took great care of my daughter, but then it got to be tough on her. She wasn't feeling that well. So when my daughter was ten months old, we bought a house and found a live-in babysitter. Of course, that made things a lot easier, knowing that she's taken care of and that she's at home. And my husband never had a job where he had to travel, and he could do a lot of his work at home, so he'd be there.

My daughter helped ground me—when all the mess is happening in the news, and at work, it was great to go home and have somebody really happy to see you. Really happy that they found a caterpillar. My family, that's what's important. Not what happens at ABC, or did I not get that assignment, or they only gave me two minutes and I should have had three minutes—those things blow up in people's minds here when this is all they have. It's very tough to be a career woman and a mother and a wife and try to do all of these things, but I'm so glad that I did and I would do it again.

My daughter went to Harvard and then to the University of California, San Francisco Medical School. She finished at the top of her class, and gave one of the Commencement speeches. I sat there just boo-hooing, thinking of all the grief I took from people saying, "How could you? You ought to be home with her." I suffered the guilt of, "If I were there with her, would she be smarter? Would she be more grounded?" She is the finest young woman today: beautiful, intelligent. She could have done anything in life. Of course, I wanted her to go into TV. She wanted to do her own thing. She's now a resident at the Harvard hospitals. I just want to tell all those women out there that worry: "How much better could she be? She couldn't be any greater! She's fun to be around, people love her, and she's smart and she's going to be very successful." So I look back on that and just breathe a sigh of relief. I think it was the combination of some stability, having a supportive husband who was just as good with her as I was, plus my working made it possible for her to go to some of the best schools and to be exposed to the world.

My son is adopted. After my daughter was ten years old, I realized that I had done so many stories about children awaiting adoption, especially black babies. My husband asked, "Isn't one enough? Now we're 38, we're 39, you're talking about getting another baby?" But I really thought I could make the difference in a child's life. So we adopted a five-week-old baby boy through a DC public agency. Now he's off to Syracuse University, where he hopes to be at the School of Communications. He's extremely creative.

So, I had a biological child and I adopted a child. I couldn't love my son any more had I birthed him. I am his mother. I taught him how to read. I taught him how to walk. I was so worried about having a young black male in the District of Columbia and having him navigate what it is to be that in this city. But he's fine. He's doing just fine.

Myth and Reality

The most discrimination I suffered was as a female, not as an African American. Of course, I have the double whammy. You really do have to work twice as hard and do twice as

much work and be so much better for half the recognition.

In 1991, I had three terrible things happen to me. I was carjacked, with someone with a nine millimeter gun in my face. I was beaten up in South Africa, when I went there with the Nightline crew when Nelson Mandela was being released. And I was flying back from New York and the plane was struck by lightning two times. I started developing symptoms of dizziness. I was feeling terrible. I didn't know what was wrong with me. My heart was palpitating, and I started going to doctors, they didn't know what it was. I thought I had a brain tumor. I thought I was going to have a heart attack. I can't tell you all the tests I went through and they couldn't find anything wrong. And one day, when the TV was on in the background, they were talking about stress, and one of the symptoms they described was people who feel terrible and nobody can figure out what is wrong with them, and dizziness and lightheadedness was part of this. So I decided to see a psychiatrist, and through therapy I have found out that I really blew out the circuits of my brain with those three things within the space of six months happening to me. And what I had never done was learn how to take time for myself. I made time for the job, I made time for the children, I did all the readings, I did good works. There was always something. I'd be up doing homework with the kids and then I'd still have newspapers that I hadn't gotten a chance to read that day, and I never took any time for me. So yeah, I balanced it, but I didn't put myself in the equation.

It's not selfish to set aside time for yourself—it is good health.

You can't be a superwoman. It's not selfish to set aside time for yourself—it is good health. You need to maintain your mental health. Over the last five years I have changed my whole way of approaching things. I've learned to say no. I go to Jamaica every year in March, and it's veg out on the beach, reading mindless, stupid stuff. I get massages once a month, and facials. And I'm feeling so much better. I've gotten my weight under control, I exercise. I never had time for that, because I wouldn't take time for that. But you can, and you need to make time. With my son, I would sometimes say, "No, I'm not talking to you tonight. I don't want to hear your problems tonight." But I think they see in me that I'm a happier person, I'm a better mother. Then when I have the time, it's not begrudging, it's because I want to. Sometimes I'll steal away from work and just go window shopping, or just walk around just to get away. You have to get away and free your mind from some of this stuff.

Sometimes I get sad now that I'm 57 and I wonder how much longer I'll be here. They said we wouldn't be around past age 40, but I'm still here. But it's hard to reconcile that I will not be Barbara Walters, or Peter Jennings. It doesn't look like it's going to happen, but I think I've made it possible for it to happen for some of these other young women coming along. So that's satisfying. The world is changing, so someone else will do it. Maybe my daughter!

The Road Not Taken

I wouldn't change anything, except I would have taken more time for myself. My mind never got a chance to rest. I think young people today are really more concerned about balance, they don't want it all work. I'm happy to hear that. Men shouldn't have it either! They're dying too young. It's been an interesting thing to watch the men. When I used to travel on the campaign, the men used to go straight to the bar. Now they want to get to a

phone and talk to their kids. They see that it's important to balance work and family, and that you need each of them to help you be centered. It helps just to have someone to talk to, to share with. My office often is the crying room, where you can't be seen. And sometimes we get so upset. A man will punch his fist through the wall. I've seen that. So we have our own little quiet places where we can go to each other. The men have tried to set us up in competition with each other. It's a nice way of divide and conquer. They anoint somebody—somebody will do well, but the rest won't. And we have not allowed that to happen, we understand what that game is.

Common Ground

Here at ABC, we have a very good group of women who are close to each other. We're our own little support network. We're fortunate in this bureau to have a female bureau chief, and it's made all the difference in the world. This is a woman who has two daughters, who understands when you need to go to a PTA meeting. The men who are running the company have wives, and they do all of that for them. We still work harder. With the wonderful husband that I have, I'm still the one that is cleaning out the closets. You still have that home stuff that you're going to think about and be concerned about and worried about that men aren't.

The wonderful thing about being a woman today is that we can make choices. I have great respect for women who stay at home and take care of children, who are staying home because they want to take care of children. Some of the mothers that stay at home are able to be the Cub Scout leaders, they can go on the field trips when I'm not able to, they are involved with their children, and with the school and with the community. There are mothers who are the precinct captains. I think you can be at home and then be this wonderful person who is in the PTA and is the teacher assistant—those are the women that I really, really respect.

I think my greatest contribution will be my children, and what they will do with their children, and their children's children. Am I bringing up some people who will be contributing, productive members of the society of tomorrow? What could be more important than that? Not my air time on ABC and if I won an Emmy.

I really worry about some of our families today, and want to see the family strengthened. We're going to have happier, better employees if we have family-friendly policies that make it easier for working parents. You can see it happening, but not as fast as I'd like. I'm optimistic about the future, and the fact that men will want to spend more time with their families and play a larger role in child rearing. That women will have the opportunities to go to the heights and make a difference in terms of these family friendly policies, once they're running these Fortune 500 companies. I'm hopeful that things will be better. ◆

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Iris Chang
Author, *The Rape of Nanking*

Iris Chang is the award-winning author of The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II, *which hit the New York Times bestseller list when she was 29 years old. Since the book was published in 1997, she has spoken about the atrocities of Nanking to audiences throughout the country and has been interviewed by numerous newspapers, magazines, radio, and television programs. She currently lives in Sunnyvale, California, with her husband. She is writing a new book,* The Chinese in America: A Narrative History.

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

My mother was an excellent role model. She was a career woman, a microbiologist. She had come to this country in the 1960s to get her Ph.D. from Harvard. My father is a physicist, also from Harvard. I think it was often difficult for her when they first came to the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, because there were not as many faculty opportunities for her as there were for my father. My earliest memories of her are watching her work in the lab. She would come home around 3:00 or 4:00 p.m. Sometimes a babysitter was there to take care of me or my brother. It seems to me that she was always hard at work, either at her research position or at home, doing many of the traditional mother things—she cooked all the meals, and she was responsible for all the shopping—gourmet meals every night. She really had a double shift—I think she worked harder than anyone else. My father worked hard, too. My mother had so many expectations that she placed on herself. It was important for me to see this. As I grew up, I always believed that women should have careers, because my mother was so dedicated to hers.

She was 28 when I was born in 1968, and 30 when my brother was born. She had me the moment she finished her Ph.D. She didn't have a tenure track position, she was a research scientist. My father got tenure at a very early age, when he was 30. His career was on a different track, a full professor and Associate Department Head. In many of the families we knew, usually the husbands came to town to accept a position, and the wives tended to be highly educated but tended not to be able to find jobs in the area, because Champaign-Urbana is a very isolated city geographically, there just weren't that many opportunities. After all these years, my mother recently was promoted and is now a Research Associate Professor.

It did seem that my mother had more education than a lot of other mothers of my friends, such as women who were working as school teachers or secretaries or simply weren't working at all. Now that I think about it, I did get the distinct feeling from my mother that it wasn't a good thing to be a housewife. This was indirectly communicated; my mother stressed the importance of motherhood, and yet she was not really one of them—many of the other mothers in town. She didn't quite fit in with the women who didn't have careers, and she didn't have a strong network of peers. Many of the women who received Ph.D.s in science from Harvard later left their fields and simply disappeared from the academic community. But despite everything, my mother is a pretty sociable person, and she does have many friends, especially in the Chinese community.

She later told me that she was unhappy that her career had not progressed as far as she would have liked. She was a very ambitious woman. She confessed later that she had later tried to

define herself more through her husband or her children, but she didn't find that satisfactory either.

Both my mother and my father always felt that we children could succeed in anything that we put our minds to. And my father never treated me differently because I was a girl. He encouraged me to study math and science, and I'm tremendously grateful to him for that, because it's helped me to become a better thinker, more logical and analytical. Both my parents encouraged me to read widely. I never really got a sense that my options were limited just because I was female.

I never really got a sense that my options were limited just because I was female.

But early on, I began to worry how I was going to balance motherhood with career, because as time went on, I could see there were many women in Champaign with Ph.Ds who were teaching high school. I was afraid that I would not be able to pursue my goals in life, that I might end up being a custodian of someone else's dreams. I was afraid, too, that if I didn't get married by a certain age, that I might never get married. I remember distinctly that when I was a teenager, one of my relatives said, "Iris is a very smart and ambitious young lady, but I predict that she'll be very lonely one day. She'll accomplish great things, but she'll probably never get married." Meanwhile, my father actively discouraged me from wearing make-up or thinking too much about dates—not to look like a mall girl. He was very much a man who respected women for their intelligence and their spirit. So there were a lot of confusing signals that I received at the time.

I was 20 when I met Brett; I was a senior in college and had just been elected to be a princess in the homecoming court. He was a person who had excelled in life and seemed unusually mature. After graduation, I worked briefly for the *Chicago Tribune* and the Associated Press and he went to Santa Barbara. I went to Johns Hopkins to get a master's degree in writing. Brett was finishing up his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois in electrical engineering, but he had the opportunity to go to Santa Barbara and it was very appealing to us. After I finished my Master's, we got married in the summer of '91 and moved out there.

Juggling

Even before I got married, I talked to my editor about writing a book. After I got married, at the age of 23, it seemed I had much more time to pursue what I wanted to do. I got a book contract in 1991 or 1992, and that's when I began writing a book. There were virtually no other opportunities for me in Santa Barbara than to be self-employed. Then Brett and I moved to Sunnyvale, California, in 1996, and I was well into the research for my second book. I didn't have any social connections in Sunnyvale at all, which gave me lots of time to write my second book.

In many ways, Brett is like my father: he respects intelligent and independent women. I think his mother wanted him to marry someone who would see his needs as her first priority, but Brett told me that wasn't what he wanted. He never once complained to me during my travels. I think it's pretty remarkable; I don't think many men are very understanding about wives who travel this much. And he never expected me to perform any domestic duties at all. Often when we were busy working, we would just order carry-out food to be delivered to us. The dry cleaning is done by a professional service, and Brett used to do some of the laundry, until he found a place to take care of that. When the apartment needs to be cleaned up, I'm usually the one that does the touching up. But as we become more busy and acquire

more money, we increasingly rely on maid service.

Some people can write even with interruptions. I'm not one of them. When you're doing research, it is fine to get interrupted, but when you're actually writing it's very difficult to have people dropping by and fielding phone calls. So I have worked out kind of a system where I could spend the maximum time with my husband and still not get interrupted. I would go to bed when he got up in the morning, then he would put in eight hours or more at the office when I was asleep. The moment that he came home from work, I would wake up, and we would have dinner together, and we would spend that evening either seeing a movie, or hiking, or going to parties. Then, by midnight, I would start writing because I knew I would have an eight-hour-block of time where no one would interrupt me because everyone else was asleep. There would be no phone calls coming in and I would be able to do nothing else but write. And I couldn't duck into a movie theater or procrastinate in other ways.

And so, that's what I did for a few intensive months, just to get the first draft out. As a writer, you spend most of your time doing the research and getting the information. But when you're writing the first draft, which is the most difficult, you don't want any interruptions. And that's how my life would be. Often it was hard. It wasn't always possible to work exclusively at night, because certain circumstances would dictate when I would to get up, and I would have to fit my hours around these circumstances. But overall, working at night has really helped me. I am certain that many people have all these marvelous books in them but they keep getting interrupted, so they never find the opportunity to commit these books to paper. Interruptions prevent them from maintaining their train of thought and they have to start over and over and over again. Most people can't just get away from these distractions to write for a few months. But switching the hours around can work. It has worked for me, and it's liberating.

Traveling has not been a problem. Brett and I have had a long-distance relationship at times. We e-mailed each other every day. While I was at Johns Hopkins, we e-mailed each other and wrote love letters all on e-mail, and it's all in a binder. So we knew exactly what happened to us day by day, and have a good record of this. E-mail can serve as a good diary.

When I travel, I'm usually too busy to be lonely. I'm so enthusiastic and passionate about what I'm doing that I don't really have time to really worry about being lonely. Brett likes it when I go away and come back with all these exciting stories to tell. I can describe all the colorful personalities I encountered and adventures—he just loves it.

A few years ago, I wanted to have three children in three years, one after another. But I read studies that it is better to space them out, about two years apart. This means if I want three children I better start having kids pretty soon, like probably within a few months. I know it will change my life entirely, and that I'm not going to enjoy the kind of freedom that I had during the last few years of marriage. I think, though, if I am careful and I'm wise I could still continue to write and set aside a certain amount of time for writing every day. I work from home, so I could still take care of my children. I think that while I'm home I could write and research and I wouldn't be any less effective as a mother. Some people don't think I can do both. For instance, I have heard comments from an uncle, like: "You are so successful, but I'd like to see how you raise your children —that should be an interesting thing to watch." I think he believes that

women should stay at home. But I'm confident that things will work out. I believe all the travel and experience that I've had thus far will only help and enrich my relationship with my children.

I wouldn't mind postponing having children a little longer, but there is no good time ever to have children, is there? Motherhood will be the beginning of a new phase of my life, something I'm eagerly looking towards, but also something I view with a little bit of apprehension because I don't know what to expect. You're only a mother once. It might be a fabulous adventure. It may set my career back a few years or it could enrich it, open up new worlds for me that could potentially make me a better writer. If I want to grow as a writer, then I should experience everything that life has to offer, and motherhood is one of those things. It's something I want to do, I just don't know how it is going to affect me. Even though I am very organized, there will probably be lots of things I won't be able to anticipate.

If we are not supporting each other as women, then we are weakening everyone.

Myth and Reality

I remember feeling stressed out in my early twenties. I felt there was only a certain window of opportunity to establish my career before I had my children, and that if I didn't establish myself by a certain point in my life, I might be nudged toward the domestic track and end up there for about 20 years. I was very concerned about that. But I didn't think I would be able to achieve something by age 30, which was kind of the deadline I gave myself for having children. But the miraculous happened, which was that *The Rape of Nanking* hit the *New York Times* best seller list before my 30th birthday, and remained there for months. After my first book, *Thread of the Silkworm*, was published, I realized how hard it was to survive as an author. I figured that I would put my career on the slow track perhaps for a decade or two and have my children and then, perhaps, when they went to college or at least after they went to school, I would go back into writing. And I didn't see anything wrong with that because I figured that having children, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity and that it's something I certainly want to do. I thought that when my children leave home I would immediately start pursuing my own goals again. I would have just earmarked the next couple of decades of my life to writing and to rearing children. But now I think there are more opportunities to hire more help, so that things might work out on all fronts, but still my career will probably slow down.

I remember having conversations with friends about this and a lot of women seemed absolutely appalled that I would think of life in those terms, where I would devote one section of my life to rearing children and another section of my life to work. They said, "You think you can just plan these things? You can plan on having children at a certain time?" Some friends were indignant that I would be so arrogant to believe that I could exercise any control over my life at all. They actually seemed offended. A lot of them weren't sure if their relationships would work out, and they felt that they couldn't plan their marriage, they couldn't plan when they would have children, or what kind of career they would have, or if they would get published as a writer or what direction their career would take them. I think many of them did not know what they wanted to do or didn't feel they had control.

But it's hard to meet somebody who really seems to have it all, who has the children and the career and the exciting life. There aren't many such women out there.

Common Ground

I have a lot of different friends and many have made different choices. What's interesting is that the friends that I've made that have had the most successful careers have not married at all —some don't ever want to have children. And often those friends of mine who are planning to have children are really not that ambitious.

I see already, among a lot of friends, women splitting into two camps. I go to baby showers often, and hear stay-at-home moms complaining about women who are selfish because they only care about their careers. I also see employed mothers who are so frazzled and so exhausted from juggling both work and domestic duties and sometimes they talk about resentment against them from nonworking women. Society has changed, but not as much as people think.

I think that often the best way of bridging the gap between women who have made different choices is for them to really sit down and listen to what everyone has to say, in order to understand different lives and the different pressures we are under. Once women realize that others care about them as people and don't really look at them with contempt or pity, there won't be as much as a problem. I think a lot of women are isolated and not communicating with each other effectively. They should be out there supporting each other, rather than sabotaging each other.

I could not possibly ever comment on the personal decisions that someone else has made. Everyone has to make their own choices. Who am I to impose my dreams and desires on someone else? That is just plain wrong. Life's too short, you have to do what is right for you and that's why I think for other people to be saying, "Well you should be doing this, you should be staying home"—that's also wrong. I think this kind of divisiveness hurts all women because it makes everyone feel guilty. If we are not supporting each other as women, then we are weakening everyone. Women who are at home will feel resentful, women who are employed will feel resentful or guilty. I think that is a terrible state of affairs.

The world is filled with people—especially women—who are obsessed with social approval and feel guilty about doing what they want. I never did understand this. Once you don't care about social approval, things become a lot less complicated. So many people's lives are dictated by what the neighbors are going to say or what people are going to think. Well, people are going to talk about you anyway—no matter what you do!

Women should help each other out. A lot of women have called wanting advice about writing, and I usually try to meet with them. And every time I'm interested in some other subject, whatever it might be, I'll just call somebody and say, "I'd like to have lunch with you, I am really fascinated by your research." I think networking between women should be encouraged. Things have improved for women, but there are also many women today who are living lives of silent desperation.

Ellen Levine
Editor-in-Chief, *Good Housekeeping*

Ellen Levine has been the Editor-in-Chief of Good Housekeeping *since 1994. She had previously been Editor-in-Chief at* Redbook *and* Woman's Day *and a Senior Editor of* Cosmopolitan. *From 1994-96, she also served as President of the American Society of Magazine Editors. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations, Lifetime Television, Covenant House, and the Christopher Reeve Foundation. She lives in New York City with her husband and has two grown sons.*

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

I grew up in Englewood, New Jersey, the older of two sisters. My mother did not work outside the home; my father did. There was clearly the expectation that we would marry and have families, but there was no real expectation about careers. At that time the sentiment was: you get married, you work for a year, and then you have children. And you'd play golf and shop forever.

My family did demand that I be a high achiever in school. I went to a women's college, Wellesley, and there wasn't talk about career paths. As a matter of fact, job or work would have been the nomenclature. It was the mid-60s and it was such an academic school that the thrust was either for Ph.D. or MRS. You were expected to teach, or perhaps go into publishing, but that meant work in the books area or as a researcher in magazines. I was very interested from an early age in newspapers. I was editor of my high school newspaper, and then editor of my college newspaper, and it wasn't because of a particular motivation; it just seemed like the thing that I should be doing—try to get a job as a reporter. My fantasy was to be Lois Lane.

I graduated from college in 1964 as a political science major and went to work as a newspaper reporter at *The Record*, a daily in northern New Jersey. I got married six months out of college. I had been dating a man for three years to whom I am still married. And he was in medical school when we married, and I supported us.

Juggling

At first, it was easy to combine work and family because I didn't have children. My husband was working terribly hard and we couldn't afford to have children.

I didn't have a career goal. My job moves were just happenstance. I got tired of working at the newspaper. There was no sense of being able to grow further there. I looked around for other jobs in the news area, but I couldn't get them; they were hiring guys at that point. We had our first child after we were married five years. I talked the newspaper into letting me work three days a week after he was born, which was virtually unheard of at that time. I also kept my maiden name, although I took my married name about a year later because my husband really hated being miscalled by my father's name. And so we had the kids and I worked freelance, and then my husband was drafted for the Vietnam War. He was posted to a New Jersey army facility as a doctor for two years. That was a terrible time. I stayed up north because I was working freelance at that point, and we had one and a half children [with one on the way]. I always had a need to keep busy.

Being a "single" mom part of the time was hard, but because I'm married to a doctor,

that's almost built in. He's an OB/GYN, and primary responsibility for child care then falls to the wife. He has a very good excuse for not being there. I worked part-time until my second child was three and my first child was seven, and I just worked whatever kind of project somebody wanted me to do. And then I went back to work full-time, at *Cosmopolitan*. I first tried to talk them into a four day work week, but they weren't buying.

For years, a housekeeper came in daily to care for our children. And then, when I started to travel for work, we got somebody who slept in part-time. It was terrific, it was expensive, but it was what we needed. The only time home/work conflicts were intensely difficult was when my kids were sick and I really needed to be home. So I stayed home. I could never count on my husband to do that, it just wasn't possible. It didn't cause any problems at work because at that point in my career, I was in a mid-level job. It must be difficult these days for women who have children when they are after 40, 45 years old and in high level jobs. They don't have the flexibility to walk out of the office at 5:00, which I always did when the kids were young.

My first boss at the newspaper was a single mom with three kids, and she was an incredible role model.

In the suburb where we lived, it was unusual for mothers to work. I would drop the kids off at school every day, and I would be the only mother that was going to drive into New York to work. But that has changed now. At the time, it never bothered me. I don't mind being different.

My kids are now 25 and 29. When they were in high school, I was an Editor-in-Chief. Teenage years are tough, and we were very strict. We never were without full-time, in-the-house help, and particularly when they were teenagers, because we didn't trust them. And when they were eight and nine years old, we did not have latch key kids. We were financially able to pay a decent salary to somebody to be there. And the people who worked for us were very responsible. We had a lot of rules. No daytime television—of course, now I find out that that wasn't always observed. But they knew it was not to happen.

The Road Not Taken

Looking back, I think I was real lucky because I think it's a whole lot easier to have your kids when you're younger, when your careers aren't peaking. But for a lot of couples, that puts their marriage at risk. That wasn't the case with us. And then I look around at other women who are my age and have three-year-olds they've adopted, and I don't know how they do it. I just don't know how they do it. I couldn't do what I'm doing at the office and then switch off and be as intense a mother as I was.

I've worked as an editor at a women's magazine from *Cosmo* to *Women's Day* since 1976. But when I started out as a reporter, I worked on the woman's page, and the newspaper was run by men. They did not have a clue about what women wanted to read. In magazines that sell to women, all the top editors are women now. That was not the case until recently.

Common Ground

I have a lot of childhood friends. Some of them have worked and some of them haven't. It hasn't influenced my friendships in any way because all of them, even if they're not working full time, are very interesting people who are painters or volunteers. They're always doing something rich with their lives.

I've mostly worked for women, although I've had some men in my life, and they've all been terrific. My first boss at the newspaper was a single mom with three kids, and she was an incredible role model and always let me think that I could do whatever it was that I wanted to do. And then my second boss was a female. And next, Helen Gurley-Brown, who was and is remarkable. My boss now is a woman. I've had very good experiences. And we try to be helpful here. If women are having problems, for example, with their pregnancy, we try to make it work out for them. But we would do it if a guy were having a problem. We have two people on staff who work four-day weeks, but then they work at a lower salary than they would have at a five day week. In our business, if you're a fashion editor, for example, you have to be here. That's not a job share because it's a vision.

I've always been working, so in the beginning I might have not been the favorite of other doctor's wives, because I was breaking the mold. But I wasn't all that attentive to gossip, so it's not hurt me often. But I do think that non-working mothers have a much harder time. People are dismissive of them. Particularly because the subjects that are being discussed might be of a particular industry, and if they aren't conversant with that, they're really left out of the conversation.

I have a lot of friends who never had children, so that's a conversation that comes up. Was it a mistake? Wasn't it a mistake? But it's not teeth-grinding talk; they made a decision and sometimes they're sorry, but not often. It's not a driving pain in their hearts. These days, they know that if they really wanted children, they could adopt. One of the things you hear a lot about now is, "Are we working too hard?" And I do believe men are worried about it too, but they might not talk about it with as much abandon as we do.

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Irene Natividad
Principal, Natividad & Associates and Co-President, Global Women's Trade Network

Irene Natividad runs her own public affairs firm, Natividad & Associates, in Washington, DC. She is also Co-President of the Global Women's Trade Network, and Executive Director of the Philippine American Foundation. She was formerly Chair of the National Commission on Working Women and the Women's Vote Project, and President of the National Women's Political Caucus. She is a frequent commentator on women's issues on public television, CNN, and numerous network television programs. She serves on the board of Sallie Mae, a $46 billion student loan financing corporation. A native of the Philippines, she is also a leader in the Asian American community. She lives in Virginia with her husband and teenage son.

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

I was born in the Philippines. My father was an engineer, and we moved from country to country. A couple years in Okinawa, six years in Iran, and then I finished high school in Athens, Greece. So I think that's why I am open to all sorts of things, because I lived in so many places where nobody looked like me. And then I came here for college when I was 18, and went to Long Island University and then Columbia. All I wanted to be was a college professor.

I studied comparative literature as an undergrad, early American literature for my doctoral degree. I taught at City University of New York and Columbia and Long Island University, and then went into administration. I did that for almost nine years—I ended up being head of the continuing education division at a state college in New Jersey. I had three thousand students, mostly women.

I also simultaneously had this other life: I was with the Manhattan Women's Political Caucus. I became part of this cadre of women leaders: Donna Shalala at that time was head of Hunter College, Carol Bellamy was City Council president, Bella Abzug was there, and Liz Holtzman. Liz and Carol started the Brooklyn Women's Political Caucus. Bella did Manhattan, I revived the Manhattan Caucus.

So I never had one thing. When I was in college, I had three part-time jobs at the same time. In graduate school, same thing, but I still graduated valedictorian. I had a very pushy mother who decried the fact that I got married because she said, "Oh, but your doctorate isn't finished." Both parents are Asian and never thought about marriage being the endpoint. My father wanted me to be an engineer. My mother just wanted me to be 'number one.' So I sort of had a typical Asian upbringing in that emphasis on education, being first in your class, never being satisfied until you brought home all the laurels.

My mother was a frustrated housewife, because spouses weren't allowed to work in the countries where my father worked. So she lived through her children. I am the eldest, there are three others after me. They all live in Canada, so I am the only American.

My husband, Andrea, and I met in college. We got married when I was 26. He's from Italy. He changed jobs and moved down here when I was elected head of the National Women's Political Caucus. He had to quit his job. I had just given birth so we had a six-month-old baby. And, of course, I was terrified—what if he doesn't get a job? But he got a job at Comsat, where he stayed for nine years. Now

he's with a Dutch telecommunications company, so it worked out, but I was terrified that it wouldn't. So I don't think he began with any ideology, but just because we were together and he cared about me, he changed his life.

So I gave up New York and whatever political base I had created by then. If I had stayed, I think I would have liked to run for City Council. I also gave up the security of an academic job. It was a big gamble, and I don't know if I thought about it sufficiently at the time. I love New York, I love the complexity of it, I love the anonymity of it, I love the fact that I was able to do politics among a certain group of women whom I admired. All my friendships were forged there, and what I knew of the United States was basically New York. When I moved to Washington, nobody expected much from this little Asian from New York who knew nobody. So the nice thing about being underestimated is when you do something, people get impressed. Asians never look their age, they always look like children, so I've always had to battle that. You over-compensate. I overdo, overprepare, and it's stood me well.

I had a very pushy mother who decried the fact that I got married because she said, "Oh, but your doctorate isn't finished."

Juggling

I delayed having Carlo because I liked our life. I liked having a career, and I knew the disruption that having a baby would cause. And then I hit 35 and the clock was ticking. I remember we came back from the movies—in New York you could see two or three movies and then you'd buy the newspaper and you could read until three in the morning on a Saturday night. It was great. And I thought, I don't want to wake up when I'm 65, all I've got are pieces of papers and clippings and stuff like that, and that's all you have to show for your life.

I was 36 when Carlo was born. He looks like me, he looks Asian. He has my coloring too, and he's also sassy. To which my friends say, "What did you expect?" My husband is also a volatile Italian, so the house is like an opera. Our babysitter is from India, and she's also hot tempered, so it's always very volcanic. So I have a volcanic son.

When we moved here, we had a live-in nanny whom we were lucky to find, who loved Carlo. She was older, and she really cared for Carlo. Andrea did the lion's share of doctors—it was like every day he was at the doctor's with an ear infection. During the four years I headed up the Caucus, I could be in three states in one week. The travel was awful. I remember after I finished my second term, I told my son's godmother and my best friend in New York, "I feel like I missed his childhood," and she said, "You did." I was stunned, because I thought she was going to say something nice. "You missed four years, Irene, just say goodbye to it and move on." So that's how I handled that.

But when I was home, I was totally there. I wouldn't go to things, and even now we only go to the movies if Carlo doesn't have any plans for the weekend.

My family was part of everything I did. I think Carlo grew up at more receptions and meetings—at the house—whatever ways we could do things together. If I had to go down to Florida for a meeting, I would ask, "Is it possible for you and Carlo to come down?" But because I traveled so much, I looked forward to being at home. And thank God that Andrea, who had wanted a child for so long, was so enamored with having a child that he probably didn't realize that he was taking on more. And he's Italian, so there's a cultural

part to this. Somebody asked what would bring an Italian and a Filipino together? We have similar religions, similar cultural values: family, family. Neither one of us had family here, so it was really, really hard. But that sense of being together, that's good. I don't know how I could have done it better. I was comforted by the fact that Andrea was so available and Janet was so good. It was lucky, too. I was lucky to have that kind of support.

I work long hours. I leave work around 7:30 and then we have dinner. Then Carlo has his homework, and when he starts doing his homework, then I do my homework. I don't know how to do just one thing. I've always done several things at the same time. And I do major things. It has to be right, it has to have a certain tone. One of the things that I decided a long time ago was that women's efforts have to look classy, because I want other institutions to view what we do as important.

Carlo has absorbed what I do. I don't know if sometimes he resents it or not. I remember when he was young, I'd be reading the paper and he had this trick where he would crash into the paper. I'm a little dense. It wasn't until later that I figured out that he didn't want me to read. It looks so obvious now, but I was so into it that I wasn't seeing it at the time. He got used to saying goodbye early. But he would say to a friend, "My mother carries her laptop even though we're on vacation." So that wasn't cool. The regrets have been mine.

Carlo will be entering the eighth grade. Now that he's older, he thinks I'm too intrusive, that I ask too many questions, that I hug him too much. I probably overcompensate.

I also serve on the board of the Sallie Mae Corporation. That has been a truly terrific learning experience, because I now see it from private sector eyes. I feel really lucky because I've been in academia, and I have done and continue to do non-profit work on an issue that will always be in my heart—women, women and equity. But I also see the private sector through my clients and the corporations on whose board I serve. I now understand even better the parameters in which they must function.

I see my life as pretty coherent. It looks messy, but to me it's of a piece and there is a thought behind it that guides what I'm doing. I've sort of evolved in terms of how I view women's reach for power and what is needed.

Myth and Reality

I never had a ten-year plan. Everything just sort of evolved. The one theme that has kept the same is women. My doctoral thesis was on women slave narratives. I remember one of my jobs in college was waitressing at faculty events, and I'd have to get a team. So I would always be organizing. If you look at my resume, it doesn't make sense, except that I organize things. I left academia because I don't want to study it, I don't want to watch it, I want to be in it. So I gave up the security of that life. It was a gamble. A big gamble. What if I failed? You don't go back. We sold our co-op, we gave up our lives. Oh, and when we moved here, we had a house in Arlington, and we got signs on our door saying, "Get out or burn down." Oh, I was terrified for the first time in my life. I don't know what it was about. It couldn't have been about the Caucus, that came later. I was brand new and we had just bought the house, so it had to be race. My husband has hazel eyes, and is very fair, and our housekeeper is very dark. They probably thought, "Oh my God, they're all in one house." It was the first time. I remember Mary Francis Berry saying to me, "Now you know. Now you know how black people face it. You may have faced other kinds, but this kind is

pernicious." I was so shocked. In New York, you're so used to being different. All of a sudden I saw myself in America and as others see me. I said, "This is Arlington, this is supposed to be a very progressive neighborhood. What is this?" I was scared.

The Road Not Taken

If there is one regret that I have for the choices I've made in terms of family, I should've had a second child. Because Carlos is lonely, and if I had known at the time the importance of that, I should have not thought so long about having a child. I should have had my first child earlier in my 30s, and then I could have had another child. It's really not fair to the only child. I am one of four children and I enjoy my family, and because we traveled so much, my family was my country. Carlo doesn't have that. That's something that I wish I could have done better.

There is no magic answer to combining work and family . . . . It's going to require people pushing for policy change. It's going to need the corporate sector.

I thought about it at the time, but the thought of feeling guilty about three people was just too overwhelming. I had a membership organization with 50 state leaders with claims on me. There is never anything that you can do right. Which is sort of typical of most national organizations, the national-state tensions. So you're dealing with a gazillion personalities, and within each state there are local caucuses. And I was faced with a challenge. When I came on board, the Caucus was a quarter million dollars in debt. You have to understand that I was very conscious of being a minority head of basically a white women's organization. The expectation of failure of minorities is high, and if there was anything that drove me it was that sense: I'll be damned if this thing is gonna fall under my time, under my name. I headed the Caucus from 1985 to 1989, and I am pretty proud of the work I did there. I not only erased that debt, I left them with a surplus and we carved out new program areas.

A long time ago, in the middle of a department store, Carlo asked me in this high pitched tone, "Why am I alone? How come I have no brothers and sisters?" I said, "Could you keep it down?" "You don't want to get fat—is that it? What is it?" Oh, I felt awful, it really felt awful. And that's really my one regret. It's not that he misses his parents—he's got three parents, I think he feels pretty full on that score. He wanted a sibling. I do regret that, because he is lonely. From the time he could dial the telephone, he was dialing someone to say, "Could you play with me?" And that's a problem. I hated hearing that. And so up until now, our social life was built around, "Are there other kids?" and, "What's Carlo doing this weekend?"

Common Ground

I have talked to other parents about work and family problems, and to be frank, I don't know which ones work and which ones don't. When I talk to them, we connect as parents. There's a swimming club near our house, and so when we meet there we immediately talk about the kids, or about the schools or the teachers.

When I go to Andrea's social events and I'm the wife, I'm nobody. It doesn't matter what you do or whether they've seen you on TV or anything like that. It doesn't matter to them—you're just a spouse. When he says, "I have to meet with this colleague, he's bringing his wife, do you want to come?" I do it. I don't love it, but I do it. All the wives are ignored, so who cares? It doesn't matter to me.

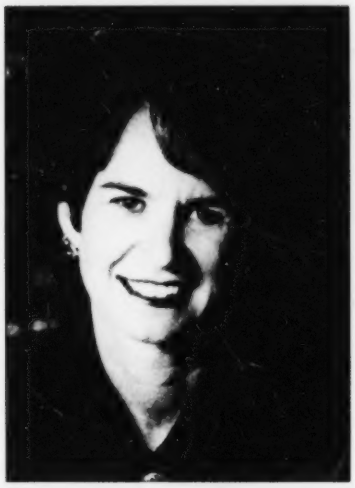
There is no magic answer to combining work and family. I am convinced that policy change doesn't happen in a vacuum and a law by itself is not sufficient. To quote Hillary Clinton, it does take a village. You're going to have to have corporations' understanding that all workers, men and women, must be able to balance work and family. So for their own bottom line concerns, they ought to help. You need schools to understand that their stupid schedule has to be changed, it has no bearing on the reality of people's lives, nor is it conducive to good education in the long term. You've got to have society at large reconfigure roles. The tasks have changed, but the roles haven't. And it is much harder to butt your head against traditional perceptions of what a mother does, a father does, a woman does, a man does, than it is to change institutions, because the cultural assumptions underpin the institutions. You need the media to stop using these simplistic antagonist phrases that create news but do not promote change. All it does promote is controversy and conflict. And you need academics to provide some of the paradigms to examine it, not to use academia as a way to trash what women haven't done right, or families haven't done right, or what the left didn't do right, but instead to examine what are the paradigms that need changing. Be part of the answer, not part of the problem.

We need to help to create a new way of discourse on this topic. It's going to require people pushing for policy change. It's going to need the corporate sector, and they are actually more ahead than people realize. So, it's happening, but there's no uniformity and it's happenstance—that's why you need standards. But the market-based impetus for creating change is happening a bit faster than cultural change that would make for permanent policy change.

When some conservatives say that American children have suffered as a consequence of women going to work, we can then show them a recent poll I worked on for the Whirlpool Foundation. Children, randomly sampled from ages 6 to 17, say, "We're well taken care of." When you ask them who does what in the house, who does most of the cooking, etc., it's the mother. She's doing 80 percent. The husbands do some, but they do traditional chores like mowing the lawn, throwing out the garbage, according to the kids.

It takes more generations to create cultural change than it does to create a new law. But the law is only as functional as the willingness of the people to implement it. The cultural stereotypes of what moms do and what dads do are so embedded that when you ask kids what they think of in terms of the future, a lot of them want marriage, but they also say work outside the home, they also want a spouse at home—this is male and female. They think in terms of a three-headed household, with someone staying home, but it's not them. What we have to fight is a cultural war, which underpins the institutional barriers that women face. That's a much more difficult thing to fight. ◆

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend
Lieutenant Governor of Maryland



Kathleen Kennedy Townsend is Maryland's first woman Lieutenant Governor and the only woman in the Kennedy family to hold elected office. She is a long-time advocate for children and families, the founder of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award, and former chair of the Board of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation. She is the eldest child of Robert F. and Ethel Kennedy, and lives in Maryland with her husband David and her daughters, who range in age from seven to 21.

The Early Years: Upbringing and Aspirations

The more we compare our work experience, our love experience, our family experience, the more we understand how much we have in common. When we try to intellectualize our experiences, that's when we notice the differences between us. As Socrates said: we get to know each other best not by talking to one another across the table, but by working shoulder to shoulder on our common problems.

Women's roles have changed drastically, dramatically, and with great excitement over the last 30 years. When I was growing up—even though I grew up in a very political family—it never occurred to me that I would run for political office. It was the men who ran for President or Senator or became a Cabinet Secretary or Ambassador. My father, Robert Kennedy, was always in public life. My mother was primarily responsible for caring for our large family, although she certainly helped out with the campaigns—no small feat, considering there were eleven children. Thirty years later, there is a change: It is not my Uncle Sarge who is an ambassador, but my Aunt Jean. Women are in the Senate. That never was the case before. Thirty-five years ago, John Kennedy said, "If my sister Eunice had been a man, she would have become President." The implication was clearly that because she was a woman, she couldn't get elected. The women's movement has opened up possibilities that certainly I didn't see, and thousands of other women didn't see. It's important to underscore the impact of cultural norms on that. Your family can have an enormous influence, but I also think that the signals society gives you shape what you consider important and worthwhile.

When I was younger, I wasn't interested in getting married. I thought it would be much better to live with my four girlfriends on a horse farm. Unlike other girls, who fantasized about their weddings, it never even occurred to me that I would get married. That view changed when my husband invited me to marry him. I was 22 when we were married. It was a quick change, but it wasn't as if marriage was a fantasy of mine, growing up.

As far as work was concerned, I always thought I would do some public activity. I had role models. My Aunt Eunice, for instance, started the Special Olympics. By the time I was in college, she was very much engaged in that. Many of my friends from college were going to law school and medical school, which I considered preparation for public life. Very few of us considered a career in business. My graduating class at Harvard had the lowest number of grads going to Harvard Business School: there were only three.

I started law school at the University of New Mexico. It was not a traditional East Coast-style law school. We had the largest class of

American Indians of any law school in the country, and we also had a large number of women, many of whom had children and were just coming back to law school. They were taken seriously and respected. The Dean of the law school had eight children, and many of them were daughters.

Juggling

I had one child during my time in law school, and a second soon after I graduated. I started law school in New Mexico and finished at Yale. Because I had a baby in law school, I took a semester longer than normal to graduate. I worked at a public interest law firm in New Haven, and they allowed me to work three days a week. Afterwards, when I applied for a job with Legal Services, Bruce Morrison interviewed me and said they didn't hire part-time workers. Eventually, he became a Congressman, and a champion for women's issues. Years before, he was not as enlightened.

. . . I asked what kinds of cases and responsibilities I would have, and I also asked what would happen if my child gets sick, or I have another child. I didn't get the job.

I decided it might be interesting to work for a large law firm. In my interview, I asked what kinds of cases and responsibilities I would have, and I also asked what would happen if my child gets sick, or I have another child. I didn't get the job. A colleague later asked why. They told him it was because my first priority was my children. "It can be one of her priorities, but not her first," they said. I think now there are tracks available where you could work part-time, and a number of women do that.

My career provided a good balance for my home life. I went to law school, I wanted to do public service, I had talent and I wanted to use it—but I also think it's important to spend time with my children, play with them, listen to them, talk to them, read stories. I thought that to do both would be a good balance. There have been times that I have been home full-time, times I have worked full-time, in fact, more than full-time. It's difficult. It helps to have a great husband, and I do. David is terrific. He's a teacher, so he spends the summers at home with the children; he has a flexible schedule, and that's very helpful. It's good for our children to know that they're important, that they're worthwhile, and that their parents love them.

Even when I worked for the Maryland Department of Education, I was my own boss. I wanted to control the funding, so I created an independent non-profit organization, the Maryland Student Service Alliance. It was great to have the power of the State and the flexibility of having an organization with independent funding. When I formed this organization, I made a real effort to be good to our employees. I made sure everyone had a prestigious title and flexible hours. When I ran for Congress, I made sure that of the precious space we had in our headquarters, we dedicated a whole room for child care. All our women employees and volunteers could bring their children. If you're going to be a woman political leader, you have to practice what you preach, otherwise it doesn't ring true.

It's not always possible to have a great job when you don't want to work long hours. Directing the Maryland Student Service Alliance was very important, because it's very important to get kids involved in community service. But I wouldn't consider it as stimulating as other jobs could be. This wasn't a part-time job, but it wasn't an 80-hour per week job, either. It was a regular job. I left at 5:00 and could be home with my children. It was

useful and worthwhile, and there was a lot of satisfaction, but there's a lot more satisfaction in being Lieutenant Governor. The range of challenges being Lieutenant Governor is much greater than it was for me starting the Student Service Alliance. It's very possible that if I didn't have three children—and then four children—at home, I might have looked for a different job at that time. You have to find a balance between how much stimulation you want and how much time with the children you want. Otherwise, it's too demanding.

I'm the only woman in my family who has run for office. I care about public issues, I'm committed to public life, and I want to make a difference. I like the role and I have talent for it. So, it all fits together for me.

The Road Not Taken

When I was in law school in New Haven, my daughter was in a day care center. If I could do it over again, it would have been nicer to have her stay at home, and maybe bring a babysitter in. I think she would have liked that more.

I didn't feel that working part-time was a problem. When I worked for the public interest law firm, the wife of one of the partners was also working part-time. People understood and supported me. The firm where I worked during my summers in law school was headed by a woman. I worked for people who were going through the same challenges I was.

I would not say that I followed a clear, obvious path to my career. If I had known I would get into politics, I would have led a very different life. I wouldn't have gone to law school in one state and then worked in another state. I wouldn't have had children so early. I had a very tough family life for a while. I was the eldest of eleven children, and my father died when I was 16. So that was tough. Maybe some of the decisions weren't as well thought out as they could have been. I didn't feel like I knew what I wanted to do, and was just flowing, going down this river from childhood to my current career. There were a lot of rocks along the way. It would have been much easier if I had known what I wanted to do, and that I had wanted to go into politics.

I went to law school because law was what my friends were doing, and because I had seen what lawyers had done in the Civil Rights movement: they had made a real difference. The idea of holding public office evolved: "Oh, maybe I could run for office." And then, basically, I ran. I hadn't planned to run; I just moved to a place where my husband could teach. Then a Republican defeated a Democratic Congressman who had been in office for 22 years, and there was no Democrat to run for the seat. Although it had been a Republican seat in national elections, I figured it was worth a try. A lot of people told me it was a stupid idea, and they were right. Still, I garnered a greater percentage of the vote than any other Democratic candidate who'd run in that district in the last twelve years. So, in that sense, I did well. And, in fact, when Parris Glendening was choosing a running mate, he saw how many votes I won, and how many I earned when I ran for delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1988, just two years later. I showed my voting strength, which obviously I wouldn't have shown if I hadn't run. In that sense it was very smart. But you can always make wiser or dumber choices. If I had thought about running for political office, when I went to Harvard, I could've stayed in Boston and run for office five years out of law school, and would've had a lot of friends and family to support me. It would've been a lot easier, I guarantee you! This classic problem of trying to find yourself takes awhile—at least it took me awhile.

Common Ground

My friends are supportive. They say: this is my choice. Other people make different choices, but this is right for me. There are other people who have to justify that they have made what my husband calls "the higher side of moral virtue choices": "If I did it, it must be the right thing to do." Most women are not self-righteous about it, but some women feel sometimes like they have to justify their choices. What I've discovered from women who were very successful in their jobs and are now mothers is that they take that same energy from work to home: they bake a thousand cookies, run the biggest fundraiser for their kids' school that the school has ever seen. They may not be spending that energy necessarily sitting quietly reading with their kids, but if they're high-energy and staying home, they use it.

If you're going to be a woman political leader, you have to practice what you preach, otherwise it doesn't ring true.

I still have my best friend from first grade, who I was with just a week ago. She's a really good pal. She also went to law school. She decided to start her own business, but it didn't work out and now she's raising her kids. She's an incredible mother, and she's now head of the Character Education Program for Montgomery County as a volunteer parent. So we ended up doing similar things.

Other friends from my childhood and from college have made other choices. One is a lawyer, one is a doctor. My summer friend, Melissa, had a great career—she was the first woman who tried to get into the Yankee's locker room as a woman reporter for *Sports Illustrated*. She sued the Yankees. She's divorced, and she adopted a baby from China last year. She's just written a book called *Single Motherhood*, and also writes about women's issues with kids. She's trying to put a life together combining her work and being a single mother. She's very happy.

I am a much more relaxed mother now than I was 20 years ago. Although I'm very busy as Lieutenant Governor, I'm doing it, I'm happy, I'm not trying to prove myself. I'd much rather be my child today than my child 24 years ago. I really do see the difference of having a child while I was in law school. I remember studying for exams and having her at my side as I was trying to type my papers. And you had to type, you couldn't use a computer, and there wasn't spell-check.

There is much more social support for women's choices today than there was 20 years ago; I speak from experience. There wasn't the same consciousness, or willingness to talk about these choices. One had to succeed. Now, people understand that there are different paths to achievement, different paths to success. I think the groups that women form now are much more mature and wise than they probably were 20 years ago. Although I had wonderful friends in New Haven as we were trying to raise our kids, we learned a lot since then, and women can now talk more honestly and openly about the struggles they feel without thinking that we're giving in to the enemy. But you couldn't have said that 20 years ago. ◆

Institute for Women's Policy Research Information Network

The IWPR Information Network is a service designed to make IWPR research and publications available on a regular basis to the widest possible audience and to facilitate communication among its members. Individual and organizational members may receive complimentary or discounted publications, discounted registration to IWPR's policy conferences, and Research News Reporter, a monthly service that disseminates research in the news relevant to women and families and includes citation and ordering information.

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Individual Sustaining Members receive Research News Reporter (a monthly compilation of research in the news which includes full citation and ordering information), Quarterly Products Mailings (including all current IWPR briefing papers, fact sheets, and working papers), a 20% discount on publications, and a 50% discount on one registration to IWPR conferences.

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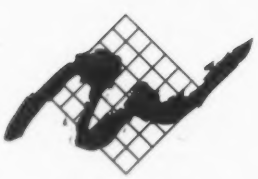

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